

# HaRakevet

SERIES 40 ISSUE 4 # 147 December 2024

הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of Israel  
and the Middle East  
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ISSN 0964-8763



- **147.01.** A new TRAXX electric locomotive touches Israeli soil for the first time. On 26th July 2024 six new electric locomotives type TRAXX from Alstom were unloaded at the port of Ashdod; they join the fleet of 44 locomotives of the same type already in service. A total of 63 locomotives have been ordered, the deliveries to be completed by the end of 2024. (Photo courtesy of IR)

147:04

## (i). TRAXX LOCOS

In 144:04 we had some illustrations of the delivery of four TRAXX locos to IR at Qishon Port and deliveries continue. Dierk Lawrence photographed a train of these on their way for delivery - Nos. 3045-3051 and 3053-3057. See item 147.03.

## (ii). ASHDOD PORT RAIL EXPANSION AND OTHER NEW FACILITIES

From a press release of 04.09.2024 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"This week Israel Railways Ltd. and HCT inaugurated the new cargo rail terminal at the southern port of Ashdod, which will improve and increase the volumes of cargo haulage by rail and thus assist removing the logistical bottleneck caused by lorries. *See photos next page.....*

The project included a 2.2km. tunnel, two cellular rooms for the GSM-R, an overhead pedestrian and bike passage and landscape development around the track and various infrastructures. The project is an integral part of a large strategic plan of the Transport Ministry to link ports, industry and quarries in order to upgrade cargo handling.

In the first stage, three freight trains each containing 100 TEU containers will operate each day.

In the coming month of October 2024 the railways will open a new additional siding to the Haifa Negev Technologies plant located at Rotem plain in southern Israel, while at the beginning of 2025 the railways will start operating two new additional sidings, both at Haifa: the Bay Port and Israeli Ship Yards."

147:02

This quarter has seen some remarkable railway developments in parts of the Middle East which - despite the irrational horrors of the present - give some hope for a better and more stable future in some areas at least. We single out here plans for a new "Land Bridge" standard-gauge railway from Saudi Arabia and into Jordan, and a railway linking the United Arab Emirates with Oman and Kuwait. Construction of new lines continues in Iran and Egypt - the latter has opened a massive modern new main station for northern Cairo and also reopened a part of the former Sinai network. It is nice to be able to report something positive and not just the dreary repetitive accounts of violence and destruction with which we are saturated by other media. At the time of going to press (the beginning of December) there is a new wavering cease-fire in Lebanon and one wonders whether the undoubted tunnelling talents of certain people could be put to a better use in building underground railways.... and yet at the same time it is reported that the long-running Syrian civil war has blown up again and the city of Aleppo has just fallen to advancing "rebels" (whom Western media seem unwilling to define too closely) and is being bombarded by Russian airplanes. What this will all mean for the (rebuilt) railways in Syria remains to be seen. The madness continues into 2025....

The Editor

- 147.03. 139.558 of 'Rail Adventure' 12 TRAXX locos (IR Nos. 3045-3051 & 3053-3057 on their way to a seaport for delivery. (Photo Dierk Lawrence & courtesy 'Eisenbahn Kurier')



•Photo Rabbi W. Rothschild taken through a train window at Braunschweig. Several Siemens multiple units were standing here in November.





***A selection of pictures from Ashdod***

- credit Mr. Daniel Fogel, I.R.)



### (iii). ASHKELON VISIT

From a press release of 05.09.2024 by the Transport Ministry:

"During a professional visit to the city of Ashkelon, the Ministry's General Manager Mr. Moshe Ben-Zaken paid a surprise visit to the Ashkelon railway station, where the Station Master Mr. Eldar Asher showed him the station building, the control room, the drivers' room, etc.

He also spoke with passengers regarding the shuttle bus services; trains are not yet running between Ashkelon and the rest of the Western Negev line to/from Be'er-Sheva."



### (iv). TRACK WORKS

From a press release of 05.09.2024 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"As an integral part of the annual maintenance programme which include also track upgrading and track components replacement in the Haifa area, the following changes to train traffic will take place on Friday, 27.09.2024:

The night trains regularly running between Ben-Gurion Airport and Haifa stations will operate in split mode; between Ben-Gurion Airport and Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and between Haifa Central the 8 and Nahariya stations.

Trains on the Be'er-Sheva - Nahariya line will operate in split mode; between Be'er-Sheva Central and Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and between Haifa Central the 8 and Nahariya stations.

Trains on the Haifa Hof-HaCarmel - Carmiel line will depart from Haifa Central the 8 instead of Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and will not call at Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and Haifa Bat-Galim stations.

Trains on the Valley Line between Atlit and Beit-She'an will start from Haifa Central the 8 instead of Atlit and will not call at Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and Haifa Bat-Galim stations. Haifa Bat-Galim station will be closed. The railways will provide alternative free bus shuttle services between the closed stations. Traffic will resume on Saturday night 28.09.2024 at about 20:30."

It was announced on 11.11.24: "Between Thursday 07.11.2024 at 22:00 and Sunday 10.11.2024 IR performed maintenance works including replacement of vital track components around Na'an junction. As a result the stations of Ramla and Mazkeret-Batya were closed; Services between Be'er-Sheva and the centre of Israel were divided.

Similarly, between Wednesday 13.11.2024 at about 22:00 and Saturday night 16.11.2024 at about 20:00 there will be no services between Ashkelon and Ashdod; replacement of vital track components at Ashkelon station."

### (v). INNOVATION

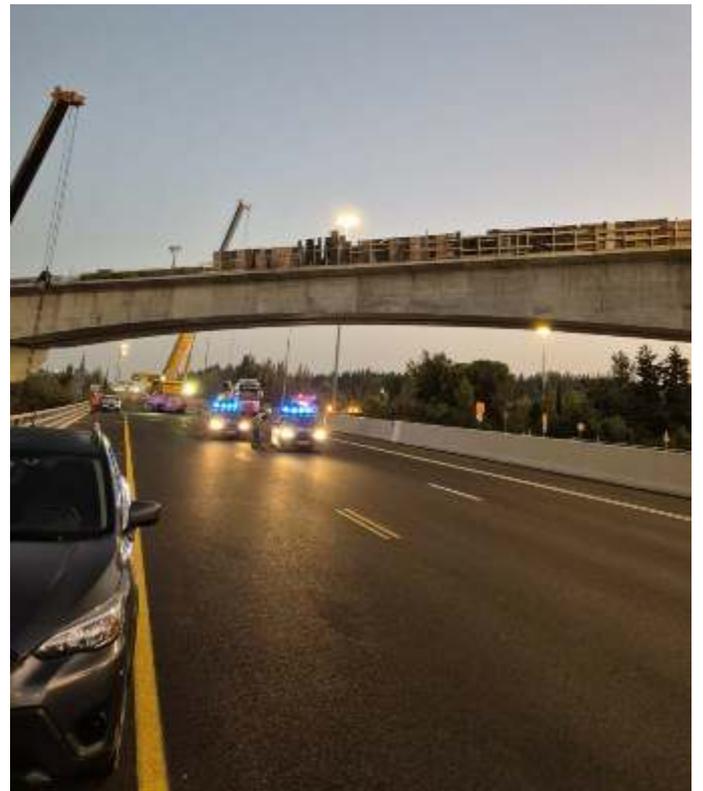
From a press release of 10.09.2024 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"As a leading governmental company, and according to the government decision of 2018, the railways are active in promoting innovations, particularly to keep the position of Israel as a Start Up nation.

The railways have currently dozens of initiatives in (POC) Proof of Concept processes in all areas, and recently the railways joined venture capital fund SARONA VENTURES."

### (vi). BRIDGE COMPLETED AT LAST!

From a press release of 20.09.2024 by Israel Railways Ltd.:



• (Photos provided courtesy of Mr. Matan Berkovich from the IR press office)

This morning the Transport Ministry and Israel Railways Ltd. completed the building of the railway bridge over Highway No.1 (Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem) at Anava Junction, finally linking railway line No. 431 (from Rishon-LeZion Moshe Dayan) with the A1 fast link to Jerusalem and with the line to Modi'in and vice versa. The bridge has been completed a week ahead of planned work with minimum disruptions for road traffic while strictly keeping to the safety regulations.

### (vii). ROCKET DAMAGE

On Sunday 15.09.24 the entrance to the station at Modiin was lightly damaged by falling sections of anti-aircraft rockets that had been fired to intercept a missile flying from Yemen to Central Israel. There were no injuries.

### (viii). CUTS!!

On 29.10.2024 the Finance Ministry announced massive budget cuts including rail projects, also including LRV and metro; details to follow. However:

### (ix). KIRYAT SHEMONA & EILAT LINES

Transport Minister Mrs. Niri Regev announced on Sunday 10.11.2024 that the budget to link the city of Kiryat-Shmona in the upper Galilee with the city of Carmiel in the Lower Galilee, as well as the link between Be'er-Sheva and Eilat (on the Red Sea) is secured.

However, both projects are in preliminary design stages and everything may yet change.

### (x). REORGANISATION

From a press release of 11.11.2024 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The Railways Directorate has decided to cancel the two subsidiaries for Cargo and Real Estate and instead merge them into the railways as integral divisions." Aharon adds: Although officially described as a vital step to increase efficiency, the real reason is that both bodies have accumulated losses.

### (xi) FOURTH TRACK ON THE AYALON

From a press release of 17.11.2024 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The project of the Fourth track on the Tel-Aviv Ayalon railway line moves forward: The Transport Ministry and the railways are pushing ahead the 4th track on the Ayalon railway line, which is an integral part of the strategic plan for the coming decades.

According to the forecast, the number of passengers to be carried by rail is to grow from 70 million in 2019 to 200 million in 2030 and 300 million in 2040; the fourth track on the system's most congested line is to provide much relief.

3,800 trucks, 2,500 concrete mixers, dozens of cranes and drilling machines were an integral part of the scenery along the 4.5 km section between Tel-Aviv Central and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations.

19,000 cubic metres of concrete were used to create 1300 piles with a total length of 29 km to be used for foundations of the longest bridge to be ever built in Israel.

With the completion of the fourth track, the Ayalon railway line will have a capacity of 26 trains/hour each direction compared with present 14."

- (Photos courtesy of Mr. Daniel Fogel from the railways' spokesman office.)



### (xii) END OF THE LINE AT GÖRLITZ...

In 'I.R.J.' Nov. 2024 p.8 is an item about Alstom restructuring its manufacturing capacity in Germany (always a euphemism for "closing something down") This includes a plan to close or sell the historic carriage building facility in Görlitz : "Rolling stock production there is likely to cease when current orders, including 96 double-deck coaches for Israel Railways are completed in mid-2026. Work that would have been undertaken at Görlitz will be moved to facilities in Eastern Europe."

### (xiii). ELECTRIFICATION PROGRESS

From I.R. 01.12.24: "Because of electrification work, starting Saturday evening December 7 2024 there will be changes to timetables in the south and north of the country. Trains will run normally during the week. The Transport Ministry will run extra buses on these lines on Saturday nights. The work will take about a year.

Israel Railways is taking advantage of the fact that no trains are running between Ashkelon and Sderot for security reasons to electrify this section.

### Changes in the South:

Beersheva Central, Beersheva North/University, Lehavim-Rahat, Kiryat Gat, Kiryat Malachi and Mazkeret Batya will be closed Saturday evenings. Trains will start/finish at Lod.

On Fridays, these stations will close at around 12:00 instead of 15:00 as normal.

Sundays-Thursdays, Beersheva Central will close at 21:00, with trains terminating at Beersheva North/University.



## Changes in the North:

Atlit station will be closed every Saturday night for the next few months. The section between Haifa Hof HaCarmel and Binyamina will be closed.

On Fridays suburban trains from Binyamina to Ashkelon will stop running at around 12:00-13:00.

Sundays-Thursdays from 21:00, trains from Beit She'an will terminate at Haifa Hof-HaCarmel instead of Atlit.

Night trains will run from Binyamina to Ben-Gurion Airport and reverse only. Nahariya, Akko, Kiryat Motzkin, Haifa Merkaz Hashmona and Hof-HaCarmel will be closed during the night.

Karmiel and Ahihud stations will be closed Saturday nights for about a year. Sundays-Thursdays, train number 470 to Karmiel will depart Haifa Hof Hacarmel at 21:15 (instead of 20:57)."

### (xiii). NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW WITH ENGINEER

From 'Jerusalem Post' 20.09.2024:

*"KEEPING HER EYES ON THE TRACK : Israel Railways engineer Ariella Wolfson is dedicated to ensuring safety. By Alan Rosenbaum.*

"The term 'hi-tech' definitely defines Israel Railways today, says Ariella Wolfson, an engineer at the company's headquarters in Lod. "I would say that my job is even more technical than many others, even more than those who work in hi-tech today in Tel Aviv." Wolfson, who worked for Amtrak in New York for three years before making *aliyah* nine years ago, studied engineering in college and decided to enter the field of railroad engineering because she viewed it as a niche and up-and-coming specialty in the engineering field

Since making aliyah, Wolfson has worked at Israel Railways. As an engineer in the company's track control department, she is responsible for reviewing the data that detects, classifies and measures track defects in the rails. Israel Railways inspects every kilometre every seven weeks for geometry defects and twice a year for visual rail defects with the measurement car.

The programme that Wolfson uses to analyse the tracks can automatically detect irregularities in the metal of the track. "We have heavily loaded trains, especially in areas like Tel Aviv and Haifa, and there are defects that need to be corrected constantly," she says. "We need to maintain the track so that it stays at optimal quality for safety and according to our standards."

Tracks in Israel, she explains, are welded in sections 18 metres apart, and the welds are often the spots in the metal that require the most maintenance. Wolfson notes that most of the railroad tracks used in Israel are imported from France by boat, and the longest section of track that can fit on a boat is no more than 18 metres long.

Countries that manufacture their own tracks such as the United States space their welds farther apart, which require fewer repairs.

Wolfson, the mother of three boys, ages eight, six and five, is one of the few women engineers at Israel Railways. "I am the only woman in the track control department, and there are very few women in the infrastructure department," she says.

Many women working at Israel Railways are in other company departments, such as finance, safety and human resources "People don't know that there's a field of railroad engineering, and it is unusual for a woman to work in that field, especially since I am a mother. They usually say, "Wow! I didn't realise that you could do that!"

Though engineering has traditionally been considered a male-dominated field, Wolfson suggests that women can make important contributions to railroad engineering, noting that their ability to check details and connect seemingly unrelated events are valuable skills.

"If something is happening on track number one, it could also mean that the same thing is happening to track two next to it, and we will check that part of the rail as well", she says.

"I think that women can thrive in a field like engineering, which is so technical and relies on being able to think outside of the box and connect all sorts of puzzle pieces. You need to look for specific details and remember what you are doing every moment of the day, what you need to do tomorrow, and what you need to do next week."

Wolfson says that Israel Railways is becoming more technologically advanced in her specific area of expertise, as well as in its overall functionality. "We are working on improving the video system and the geometry system that we use to measure the tracks, and it's very up-and-coming using AI technology," she enthuses.

"Everything has become technologically advanced – the way that we inspect the rails, the way the trains will be dispatched, electric trains, the signalling system – all in order to improve the safety and the quality of the transportation system."

Adding these new features will require more electrical and mechanical engineers to implement these upgrades to the railroad.

Beyond adding advanced technological features, Israel Railways is adding new lines with new capabilities.

"Like the new Jerusalem line, for example. It's comprised primarily of bridges and tunnels, and maintaining such a line required new advanced technology that we never had here in Israel for inspecting the cables and the electricity," says Wolfson.

"All of these things are becoming much more advanced in order to improve the quality and to enable the trains to run at higher speeds. The technology that we're going to have here in another 15 years is not going to be anything like that we've had in the last 10 years. It's going to be a whole different ball game. For example, Route 431 that will connect Tel Aviv and Rishon LeZion to Modi'in and Jerusalem is composed completely of bridges."

She notes that the design of bridges for trains is different from the design of bridges for automotive traffic.

Though she has lived in Israel for a number of years, Wolfson says that the reality of living in Israel during a major war hit home for the first time after Oct. 7. Many of her co-workers were called to reserve duty, and the offices were quieter than usual. "There are a lot of young engineers at Israel Railways in their 30s who spent six months in Gaza," she says. "I had to pick up some of the slack, being a woman and a mom who's not going to go to war. Many people came to me for help with questions about things and to cover the work of people who were in reserve duty. That was a different culture shock for me."

Israel's railway system is relatively small compared to those of larger countries, and Wolfson is the sole person responsible for inspecting the metal rails of the entire system

"It's meaningful to be the only one doing something," she says, "and it's directly related to the safety of travelling by train, which impacts thousands of people in Israel riding the train. One of the biggest parts of a person's day is how he or she is going to get from point A to point B. Soldiers are taking public transportation on the way to their bases."

There's not one day that it doesn't cross my mind when I'm working that this needs to be safe. Whatever I'm inspecting needs to be the safest. Everything needs to be inspected and checked, and no stone can be left unturned when it comes to looking at the rails. Transportation is a huge part of our country, and to be a part of the Israeli railway system is a big deal. Doing this work in Israel as an American who made aliyah is even more meaningful. It's special for me to be a part of the country and to be a part of something that's a pretty big part of the country – Transportation."

#### (xiv). PROBLEMS FOR TROOPS WITH SHABBAT TRANSPORT

From 'Times of Israel' 04.10.2024:

"Some reservists summoned for service amid the intensifying fighting with Lebanon's Hezbollah were unable to reach their bases due to Israel's prohibition on public transportation during the Jewish holidays and Shabbat, leaving those abroad without flights home and others with no rides to base.

With Israeli airlines grounded on weekends and holidays, many reservists who were abroad and whose flights with foreign carriers were cancelled due to the recent escalation had no way home. Those in Israel over Rosh Hashanah still faced difficulties reaching base, as buses and trains have all but stopped since Wednesday evening when the Jewish new year celebration began and will not resume service again until Saturday evening.

Private initiatives sprung up on social media to meet the challenge, with Israelis offering reservists free rides to staging grounds on the Lebanese border. Brothers in Arms, the anti-government reservist group, was organizing transportation for reserve troops, according to the Kan public broadcaster.

The Tel Aviv municipality announced Friday that it would also offer free buses for soldiers over the weekend. The buses will travel from Tel Aviv to and from Haifa and Beersheba, near many IDF bases, with service beginning at 8 p.m. Friday and continuing through Saturday. The service is part of Tel Aviv's "We move on weekends" initiative that provides free rides in and around Tel Aviv over Shabbat when state public transportation does not operate.

The Defence Ministry slammed the Transportation Ministry for its repeated failures since Hamas's October 7 attack to provide for reservists' transportation on holidays and weekends. "The IDF and Defence Ministry are busy with the war effort and defeating the enemy," it said in a statement Friday. "The transportation ministry is expected to chip in."

The Transport Ministry, in turn, said it had provided the army with dozens of buses to shuttle soldiers, and was prepared to provide thousands more. "Every claim and objection vis a vis the reservists should be forwarded to the IDF," the ministry charged.

The 'Calcalist' business daily cited Transportation Ministry officials who sought to shift the blame to the Defence Ministry, saying the latter had not declared a national state of emergency that would allow buses and trains to run over the weekend. The newspaper said, however, that the army's shuttle service was inadequate and that the Transportation Ministry could activate trains and buses of its own accord, without a Defence Ministry directive.

The issue of public transportation on Shabbat and the Jewish holidays has long been a contentious issues, with ultra-Orthodox parties – often

parliamentary kingmakers, and key members of the current government – adamant that no state-run buses, trains or airlines operate on those days. The rule also affects Israel's three main airlines – El Al, Arkia and Israir. Critics have called on the government to utilize its "golden share" in El Al, the largest of the three, to force the airline to operate flights on Shabbat.

Transportation Minister Miri Regev – whose deputy, Uri Maklev, hails from the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party – has come under fire for cleaving to the longstanding rule over the pleas of soldiers and their families. After the war began on October 7 – when thousands of Hamas-led terrorists stormed southern Israel to kill nearly 1,200 people and take 251 hostages – Regev had allowed trains to operate over the weekend, but stopped the programme in mid-November.

Regev has also been criticized for her failure to prevent flight cancellations en masse by foreign carriers spooked by Iran's threats and missile attacks. Iran's ballistic missile attack on Tuesday led several large airlines, including Germany's Lufthansa, to suspend their Israel routes. Israel saw similar waves of cancellations amid a threatened Iranian attack in July and an actualized one in April, as well as months-long cancellations following October 7.

Many passengers were deterred from shifting to Israeli airlines, which have continued flying but hiked up ticket rates as the competition has melted away, 'Calcalist' reported Thursday."

#### (xv). DREAMS OF PROGRESS AND ELECTRIFICATION

On 24.10.2024 the Transport Ministry announced moving one step forward in building the 60km fast track between Sorek Road (south of the city of Ramla) Interchange and Be'er-Sheva North/University station, to be served by 250 km/h electric trains, thus bringing Tel-Aviv to about 38 minutes from Be'er-Sheva.

Beyond creating headlines, the whole project is currently only a vision due to the ongoing war; Nobody knows where the money will come from.

On the same date both the railways and the ministry announced an acceleration and completion of the electrification programme by electrifying the remaining still-not-electrified 300 km; 700 km has already been electrified; the total electrification is planned for 1,000 km.

The electrification will be done on the line to Carmiel (Lower Galilee) as well in both the older line to Be'er-Sheva and the Negev Western line to Be'er-Sheva; works will be performed at weekends when traffic is low, so the stations on the relevant sections will be closed at weekends.

#### (xvi). BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

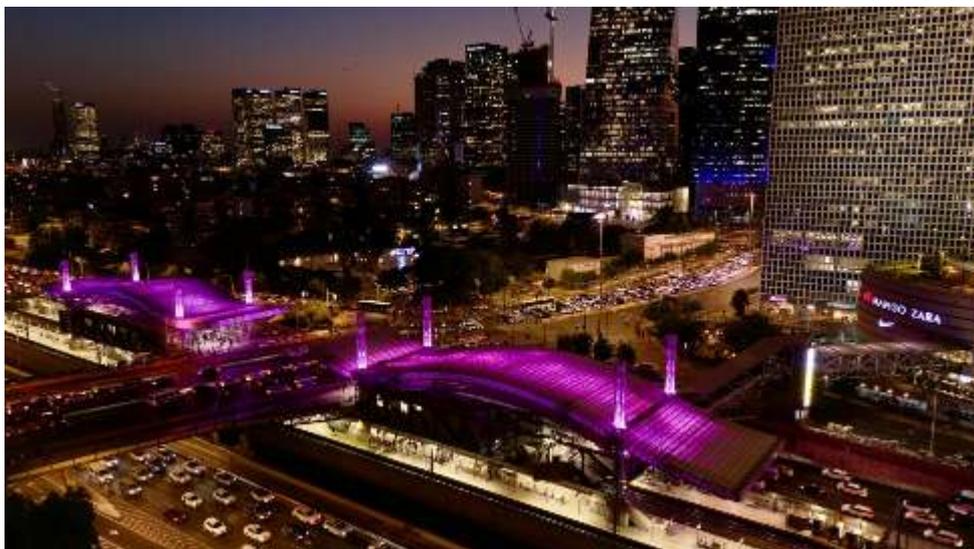
From a press release of 27.10.2024 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"As part of the month of increasing the awareness of breast cancer and of performing preliminary medical examinations, the railways illuminated both Tel-Aviv HaShalom and Be'er-Sheva North/University stations with pink colour lights."

•See picture left

#### (xvii). AERIAL ATTACKS

On the morning of 29.10.2024 an Alstom (Bombardier) double-deck carriage was damaged at Nahariya station when attacked by a UAV.



147:05

(i). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 224170: Providing Consultancy, Design and Supervision services regarding Dangerous Trees and Plantations of railways agronomy: The railways intend to select up to 2 winning bidders. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 30.09.2024.

(ii). Tender No. 124270: Providing services of Monitoring, Maintenance and Upgrading of the railways' Combined Quality System:

The tender is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 21.11.2024.

(iii). Tender No. 124267: Supply, Installation and Maintenance Services of Attendance Clocks and Ancillary Services: The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 90 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 20.11.2024.

(iv). Tender No. 224168: Installation of Acoustic Shielding on inhabited houses along tracks: The railways intend to select up to 2 winning bidders. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.11.2024.

(v). RFI for Diesel Particulate Filters ("DPF"). The RFI documents and any additional information can be obtained, free of charge, at Israel Railways website: <https://tender.rail.co.il/> Any Request for Clarifications should be addressed, in writing only, to Mrs. Hilit Bar Sorya, International Procurement Coordinator, by e-mail: [hilitb@rail.co.il](mailto:hilitb@rail.co.il). Respondents shall be responsible for verifying receipt by ISR of Requests for Clarifications. All responses must be submitted no later than November 7th , 2024 as specified in the RFI documents.

(vi). Tender 42228: W14 Rail Fastening Systems. "Israel Railways Ltd. wishes to obtain bids for the Manufacture and Supply of W14 Rail Fastening Systems. Tender Documents are available for review and download at ISR's website at the following address: <https://tender.rail.co.il> . Any Request for Clarifications should be addressed in writing only to Mrs. Hilit Bar Sorya, International Procurement Coordinator, no later than September 16, 2024, by e-mail: [hilitb@rail.co.il](mailto:hilitb@rail.co.il). Bidders shall be responsible for verifying receipt by ISR of Requests for Clarification. All proposals must be submitted between and no later than November 12, 2024 to November 13, 2024 in one main envelope into Tender Box No. 8 at the following address: Israel Railways Ltd., Procurement & Contracting Division, Yoseftal 1, Lod, 7136801, Israel. ISR shall be entitled to postpone the deadline at its sole discretion."



147:06.

## A. JERUSALEM

On 25.09.24 Steve Sattler wrote:

"The Kfir consortium that runs the concession of the RED LINE tram ( light-rail) in Jerusalem has just announced that the November '24 opening has been postponed into 2025.

The main reason is that the MOT still has safety issues with the two new extensions.

A second issue is that 'still unresolved' financial contact between the Ministry of Finance and the CFIR concession. There are over 30,000 daily visitors to the Hadassah Hospital who are waiting for this Southern extension to open and run.

Similarly, the Neve Yakov residents (to the North) want this tram line to function, as the daily bus service is inadequate."

## B. TEL AVIV

### (i). SITUATION REPORT.

Steve also wrote: "On the other hand - the new (it is now 13 months) Red Line in Gush Dan (Tel Aviv) runs very well, the trains arrive on time and the service is excellent. The only major problem is the less-than-expected public useage of the service and this has reduced the income of the Light-Rail administration (NETA) by about 30%. This lack of income will delay the next two lines from been finished as expected by 2028. The Purple and Blue Lines will not be available till about 2035. The Purple Line (from the East) will probably be the first to be active. The future and futuristic METRO lines are - at this time - a distant dream and if they run by 2040; this will be a miracle."

(ii). NTA Tender No. 491/2024: Providing External Legal Consulting Services regarding Project Supports and other Legal Services: NTA intends to select up to 10 winning bidders. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 18.11.2024.

### (iii) TERROR ATTACK IN JAFFA.

Several reports: On 01.10.24 two gunmen shot and killed at least six people and wounded many before being themselves eliminated - this was on Jerusalem Street in Jaffa near a Light Rail station.

Steve Sattler wrote: "Yesterday (Tuesday 1 October 2024) at 6:53pm two young terrorists - residents of Hebron, apparently were praying and hiding at a local Mosque in Jaffa; then came out, took the local Light-Rail tram at the Bloomfield station in Jaffa and began their hideous killing spree.

One had a long ( and stolen ) Israeli Galil rifle and the other had a knife. They apparently shot 6 passengers on the South-bound tram (in the tram); - three died, and then getting-off at the Tel Aviv Erlich station, they walked along Jerusalem Boulevard, shooting and trying to knife local passers-by. They then ran - East, to Aza Street and near a local Synagogue continued their killings.

Some of the armed Tel Aviv Sela unit were nearby and with other armed civilians shot and killed the two terrorists. Within minutes some police, other armed civilians and medical services were at the scene. The wounded were taken to the local Wolfson hospital and some to the Ichilov hospital.



The police have - at this time announced that 6 locals have been killed. Some 12 were injured, and some seriously.

Almost at the same time (from 7.20 pm) National-Defence sirens sounded across Israel and within 8-9 minutes 181 Iranian ballistic missiles flew at Israel. All were shot down over Jordan, Syria and over many areas over Israel, especially the Negev zone. Debris from these missiles fell across the country and one restaurant in North Tel Aviv was damaged and an empty school in Gadera - East of Ashdod.

One PNA policeman - in the PLO Jericho Autonomy - was hit by debris and was killed.

During that hour, when Iranian ballistic missiles and debris was flying over and falling on Jaffa, some 200 police, armed civilians, the Sela unit and medical units were dealing with the wounded near the Light-Rail, confirming the dead, searching the neighbourhood for the terrorists and other sympathizers and collecting facts. The 'Central Control Room' for the Light-Rail stopped all trams in this southern section of the RED LINE. Trams South of Erlich were either stopped or told to reverse. Trams North of Shalma station maintained their routine but only for all Northern stations.

It is likely, that over the next few days more details will be released by the police."

Then from 'Times of Israel': "The death toll in the Jaffa terror attack has been revised to six, police say. Another nine were wounded. One of the terrorists was armed with an assault rifle, while the other had a knife. The pair shot and stabbed civilians on the Tel Aviv light rail, before continuing on foot, attacking people on Jerusalem Street in the city. A municipal security officer and armed civilians shot and "neutralized" the two terrorists, police add."

From several further accounts in 'Times of Israel': "Seven people were killed and at least eight others wounded in a shooting and stabbing terror attack in Jaffa on Tuesday evening, according to Israel Police, in one of the deadliest terror attacks in recent years. Two terrorists, one of whom was armed with a rifle and the other with a knife, attacked civilians on the Tel Aviv light rail before getting off and continuing on foot and shooting and stabbing people on Jerusalem Street in the city. A municipal security officer and armed civilians shot and "neutralized" the two terrorists, police added. The two terrorists were identified as Mohammed Mesek, 19, and Ahmad Himouni, 25, both Palestinian residents of the West Bank, who were in Israel proper without a permit. Casualties were evacuated to Wolfson Medical Center in Holon and Ichilov Medical Center in Tel Aviv. The identities of the victims were not immediately released. The terror attack - one of the deadliest single attacks in Israel in recent years - came amid heightened tensions in Israel as the Israel Defence Forces announced a ground incursion into Lebanon in a bid to push the Hezbollah terror group away from the border and just minutes before Iran launched a massive missile attack on Israel."

Then: "Authorities on Wednesday named six of the seven people killed in Tuesday night's terror attack at a light rail station in Jaffa, as new details emerged on the two terrorists who carried it out, and the Israeli military imposed a closure on their hometown of Hebron in the West Bank.

Hamas took responsibility for the attack Wednesday, saying its perpetrators, Mohammad Mesek and Ahmad Himouni, were members of the terror group.

Seven people were killed and 16 others wounded in the attack on the Tel Aviv light rail and a nearby road in Jaffa, in one of the deadliest terror attacks in recent memory.

The six victims were named on Wednesday as Revital Bronstein, 24, from Bat Yam; Iliya Nozadze, 42, a Georgian citizen; Shahar Goldman, 50 from Lod; Inbar Segev Vigder, 33, Nadia Sokolenco, 40 and Jonas Chrosis, 26, a Greek citizen. The identities of the final victim was not yet cleared for publication.

Shahar Goldman, a dancer, was married just over a year ago, according to a statement by Lod Mayor Yair Revivo.

Inbar Segev Vigder, who was also married in 2023, is survived by her baby son Ari, born last December. "I had been serving in Gaza, and I came specifically to be with her for the birth," recalled her husband Yair. "She was my greatest love and a great mother, full of light and love."

Revital Bronstein was eulogized on Wednesday by Bat Yam mayor Zvika Brot as "a brilliant programmer and a gifted comic book artist."

The sixth victim, Jonas Chrosis was a Greek citizen who was living in Jerusalem while he studied architecture in Tel Aviv. "He was kind-hearted and sensitive and always helped everyone," one of his classmates told Channel 12. "He expressed infinite optimism in the face of every difficulty that came his way. He was talented, funny, and humble. He was always kind to the people around him and was a loyal friend who saw the good in everyone. He was a talented piano player."

The terrorists, meanwhile, were named as Mohammad Mesek, 19, who was killed at the scene, and Ahmed Himouni, 25, who was seriously injured. Both men are Palestinians from the West Bank city of Hebron who were in Israel proper without a permit.

Diana Svertzov, an Israeli rhythmic gymnast who won a silver medal at the Paris Olympics, was at the light rail station at the time of the attack, and told Channel 12 that the terrorists did not seem suspicious, and one of them was wearing a pin representing solidarity with Israelis held hostage in Gaza by the Hamas terror group.

"One of them looked at my Olympics necklace and smiled at me. They didn't look like terrorists. One of them had an M16 rifle, and the other one was in a polo shirt, with a hostage pin. There was no reason to be suspicious. It never crossed my mind, what was about to happen," she said. Reservists in Israel are often seen carrying rifles while wearing their civilian clothes.

The Israel Defense Forces has imposed a closure on Hebron, the terrorists' hometown, and on Wednesday, the IDF said it had detained and questioned several people on suspicion of aiding the terrorists in purchasing the assault rifle used in the attack and infiltrating Israel.

It was also revealed on Wednesday that before carrying out the attack, the terrorists entered the Al-Nuzha Mosque, stashed their bags in the mosque's bathroom, and threatened worshippers not to leave. One of the terrorists "opened the door, with an M16 in his hand," Ali, a member of the congregation, told the Ynet news site. He noted that the terrorist had entered the mosque through the women's entrance. He just peeked his head in, and said, 'Nobody go outside! Anyone who goes out is a dead man,' and he left. The second one waited outside. They closed the doors, we called the police, and we heard shooting," Ali said. Another congregant, identified only by his first Hebrew initial Dalet, told Ynet that the men initially entered the mosque with large backpacks, which they left in the bathroom and from which they took their weapons.

The relation between the two accounts was not immediately clear.

The events at the mosque were spotlighted after National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir declared at the scene of the attack on Tuesday that if the terrorists were revealed to have used the mosque for carrying out the attack, the house of worship must be destroyed - comments that sparked immediate backlash. Yesh Atid MK Merav Ben Ari said in a statement that Ben Gvir "didn't just evade responsibility, as per usual, he also threatened the Arab citizens of Jaffa." The national security minister "won't succeed at harming the important coexistence that is kept between Tel Aviv and Jaffa, he should take his racism elsewhere," she said. Tensions in Israel and the West Bank have soared since October 7, when terrorists burst through the Gaza border into Israel in a Hamas-led attack, killing some 1,200 people and seizing 251 hostages.

Since then, 40 Israelis, including security personnel, have been killed in Palestinian terror attacks in Israel and the West Bank - including in

Tuesday's attack. Another five members of the security forces were killed in clashes with terror operatives in the West Bank."

On 06.10 came: "The seventh victim of last week's terror attack in Jaffa was named Sunday as Victor Shimshon Green. Green, 33, was living in a homeless shelter in the city where two Palestinian terrorists carried out the attack last Tuesday. Aside from those slain, 16 were wounded in the attack on the Tel Aviv light rail and a nearby road in Jaffa, in one of the deadliest terror attacks in recent memory."

On 14.11.2024: "An indictment is set to be filed against one of the two Palestinian men suspected of perpetrating a Hamas terror attack in Jaffa on October 1 that left seven people dead and 16 wounded, Israel Police and the Shin Ben security agency announced on Thursday. According to the joint statement, the State Attorney's Office will charge Ahmed Himouni, 25, from Hebron in the West Bank, with acts of terrorism and murder.

During the attack, the two terrorists, one armed with a rifle and the other with a knife, attacked civilians on the Tel Aviv light rail, then got off and continued their rampage on foot along Jerusalem Street in Jaffa.

The second attacker, Mohammad Mesek, 19, also from Hebron, was killed at the scene by a municipal security officer and armed civilians who shot the two terrorists. Himouni was seriously injured.

The owner of a taxi company and two taxi drivers were indicted earlier this month for driving the two into Israel. The three indicted individuals were accused of driving the terrorists, whom they knew didn't have entry permits into Israel, to Tel Aviv. Those indictments were on charges of causing death by negligence and causing death by recklessness.

The investigation found that the terrorists had been transported from Hebron to Bethlehem and then to East Jerusalem by a network of Palestinian drivers, according to the Ynet news site, some of whom were charged earlier this month. Ynet added that the gun used in the rampage was purchased in Hebron with the intention of carrying out attacks in Israel.

According to the earlier indictment, the terrorists had originally planned to carry out their attack at a crowded venue, such as a sports stadium. While passing by the Bloomfield stadium, one of the terrorists asked the driver if there was a game on that evening, ostensibly to see if he could carry out a mass terror attack at the venue. There was no game being played that night.

Before carrying out the attack, the terrorists entered Jaffa's Al-Nuzha Mosque, stashed their bags in the mosque's bathroom, and warned worshippers not to leave. Ynet reported on Thursday that new footage mentioned in the indictment showed the two leaving the mosque, throwing ammunition over the fence and exiting to the street in search of victims.

In another piece of footage, the terrorists could reportedly be seen running toward the light rail, where they boarded a train and attacked passengers, then getting off and continuing to shoot and stab people on the street in Jaffa.

The seven civilians murdered in the attack were Victor Shimshon Green, 33; Revital Bronstein, 24; Shahar Goldman, 30; Inbar Segev Vigder, 33; Nadia Sokolenco, 40; Ilia Nozadze, 42, a Georgian citizen; and Jonas Chrosis, 26, a Greek citizen.

The attack had come amid heightened tensions as the Israel Defense Forces announced a ground incursion into Lebanon in a bid to push the Hezbollah terror group away from the border, and just minutes before Iran launched a massive missile attack on Israel."

#### (iv). THE GUSH DAN METRO.

From Steve Sattler: "The new unit for the Gush Dan Metro inside the Minhal HaTichnun (The National Planning Authority) has a new director - 41-year-old Olah Axelrod of Jerusalem (who has Degrees in Ecology, Geography and City Planning). She now runs the whole METRO planning, Finance and Design programme. This will be the biggest planning and construction project ever attempted in Israel. There will be three METRO lines - at first - and Rehovot / Ramle will connect with Ra'nana / Kfar Saba - as one line [M1]; Petach Tikva through B'nei B'rak to Tel Aviv Centre will be another, [M2] and the third is a half-circle of BatYam / Holon - Ramat Gan / B'nei B'rak and then West again to Glilot [M3].

This whole project will fill the years 2025 - 2040. One-third of this Metro will be underground - in the central sections. A selected group of 'experts' was sent recently to India and South Korea to study the processes and among other issues they have already chosen the metro carriage interior designs from India and South Korea."

#### (v). ART AT STATIONS

Israel Museum Light Rail Station Pop-Up Exhibition: Art from Jerusalem takes over Tel Aviv! The city's light rail stations are now exhibition spaces, showcasing iconic masterpieces from the Israel Museum. This is the first collaboration between Tel Aviv's light rail and a national cultural institution - don't miss it!

More info in 'Tel Aviv Magazine' - November 2024

#### (vi). GREEN LINE PROGRESS

From a press release of 18.11.2024 by the Transport Ministry:

"The LRV Green Line project is moving forward and this evening at the tunnel of Rabin Square (near the City Hall) there was a breakthrough of the twin tunnels of the northern wall by the eastern TBM, while the western TBM continues boring southwards.

The completed section runs in a 2.3 km tunnel with a 10m diameter.

The south section will be 2.2 km long giving a total length of 4.5 km of tunnels.

The Green Line will be 39 km long with 62 stations, 4 of which underground; it is planned for opening in 2029, with a forecast of 275,000 passengers/day and service frequency of 4 minutes."

- Photos from the ceremony provided by courtesy of Mrs. Orly Baramy from the ministry's spokesman office; credit for pictures: Mrs. Orly Baramy.





## Other Middle East Railways

147:07

### A. TURKEY

#### (i). A TANK WAGON FOR TANKS

From "R.G.I" 03.09.2024: "State-owned rolling stock manufacturer Türasas has developed a wagon to enable the Turkish Armed Forces to transport military vehicles including Altai main battle tanks."

#### (ii). HIGH SPEED TRAIN DEVELOPED

"Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Abdulkadir Uraloglu, has announced that Turkey's first domestically-produced high-speed train will begin dynamic track testing in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Uraloglu says that state-owned rolling stock manufacturer Türasas is expected to complete design work by the fourth quarter of this year, enabling production to commence, followed by static testing of the first train.

The eight-car train will have a maximum speed of 225km/h, each car having a motor bogie and an unpowered bogie. The new design will be compliant with the European Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) for passenger rolling stock, persons with reduced mobility (PRM) and noise emissions.

Each train will have a total of 582 seats, plus two spaces for passengers in wheelchairs. According to the minister, there will be a bistro area onboard and other passenger amenities will include folding at-seat tables with contactless quick-charging stations.

As Turkey works to become self-sufficient in rolling stock production, the new high-speed train will be built using entirely domestic resources, Uraloglu says. Türasas was recently awarded a contract to supply 95 electric locomotives to Turkish State Railways (TCDD), and on May 27 2023 the first Sakarya National EMU built by the manufacturer entered service with TCDD.

The high-speed train has been developed in conjunction with the Rail Transportation Technologies Institute (Rute), a research and development centre established by TCDD and Tübitak, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey.

Rute has developed traction equipment and the train control and management system (TCMS). "Thanks to this collaboration, the critical subcomponents that make up the train have also been produced using local and national resources," Uraloglu says."



### (iii). TURKISH TRAMWAY NETWORKS

In 'Op de Rails' February 2024 is an article by Maurits van den Toorn, actually the second part of a series, describing the current situation of trams in Turkey. (This is of course ever-changing.) (Translation from Dutch by the Editor.)

a) **ESKISEHIR** (900,000 inhabitants) in Anatolia has had a tramway since the end of 2004. Surprisingly enough it is built to metre gauge. It seems the Mayor was so charmed by what he saw during a visit to Linz in Austria that he decided to have a sort of copy of this in his own city, with as the only concession to practicality a change from the 900mm used in Linz to 1 Metre gauge. The similarities go further, for the stock is also liveried in similar fashion, Flexity Outlook trams from Bombardier painted in white with orange. The trams here are however five sections whereas those in Linz are seven-section.

The network began with two lines but has been rapidly extended whereby some lines have been built into still-undeveloped areas in the hope that construction of new districts will indeed take place here and create the traffic required. There are currently seven lines totalling 37km, two 'lines' run over most of the sections of route.

Having started with eighteen Flexitys from Bombardier, later fifteen more were added to the fleet. In 2018 further expansion of the fleet involved fourteen 5-section ForCity Classic trams from Skoda. Unlike other places the trams here do not carry advertising and all look immaculate and brand-new. In many respects this is indeed a model network. Also there is no problem in photographing trams here.

b) **KAYSERI** (1.2M inhabitants) in the middle of the country has had a tram since 2009, the system being called 'Kayseray'. There is one trunk east-west line through the lengthy city with branches at each end. The total currently comprises four lines with around 40km. Lines T1 and T3 run together from the eastern end and divide in the western part of the city. Line T2 begins in the south, continues over the joint section and ends in the centre. T4, the newest addition since the end of October 2023, begins in the south-east and ends like T2 in the centre. This part of T4 is the beginning of a planned second line through the city centre to relieve the pressure on the existing one. In a few years the new line shall cross over the line in the centre and head to the north.

The fleet is formed of 38 5-section Sirios from Ansaldo-Breda and 31 trams from Bozankaya. Trams run permanently in pairs. In Autumn 2023 a series of eleven slightly-different trams were being delivered by Bozankaya. Apart from these newcomers all trams carry advertising but the current mayor would like this to end and will not renew existing contracts with advertisers.

c) **GAZIANTEP** (1.8 M inhabitants) has had a tramway since 2011 and currently has three lines. The total length is ca. 20km. The tramway system suffered little severe damage during the heavy earthquake of February 2023 which caused many casualties in the city; operations were suspended for ten days and in this period the trams served as emergency accommodation for people who had been made homeless.

The choice of material is rather special; only second-hand stock has been acquired. There are 27 trams of Type P from Frankfurt (Main); 25 of these have received new front ends and many work in pairs. The remaining two are used to provide spare parts. Also the entire fleet from Rouen has been acquired, 28 trams of Type TSF2 which have been replaced in their home city by larger Citadis trams. 21 of these are in service, four are being or will be rebuilt.

There is talk of laying a new line partly or wholly parallel to the suburban railway line with different stock to that used on the urban routes. It is not yet clear what precisely will happen, but it does not sound really like a Tram.

d) **ANTALYA** (1.3M inhabitants) is popular with tourists. The first rail line here was a single-track 'nostalgic' tram built 1999 of some five kilometres along the old city and the coast. For this, three saloon trams were acquired from Nürnberg, two of which are required to run the

service. The trams, now over 60 years old, are still running on this line which now has more than a purely touristic function.

From 2009 two modern fast tram lines have been added: the 'Antray'. Total length is ca. 53km. Line T1 runs from Fatih in the west via the city centre to the airport (T1A) and the Expo (T1B) in the east. Line T3 runs in north-south direction from Varsak to Müze (the archaeological museum), where one can change to the nostalgic tram which currently carries line number T2. There was once a plan to replace this with an extended T3 but it has been decided against this. It would in any case be difficult to run the broad T3 express trams in the narrow streets where the T2 runs.

On the express tram network there are fourteen five-section Urbo-2 trams by CAF and eighteen Eurotem by Hyundai, mostly running in pairs. The newest delivery comprises two trams from Bozankaya. There were to have been fifteen, but following a difference of opinion over the rising costs (as a result of the high inflation, foreign components are therefore much more expensive) the deliveries were halted. The constructor is now seeking other clients for these trams which have largely been completed.

e) **KONYA** (1.4M inhabitants) in the middle of the country has had a tram since 1992. Construction financed by German loans had begun in 1987 but was halted for a while due to the influence of an anti-tram party in the city council. Work was resumed only after another change of administration.

For a long time there was one line from the central square Alaaddin in the centre heading to the north, but this has grown in a sequence of stages as the city also expanded rapidly and it is now some 20km. The terminus at the north end comprises a large loop with three halts across the area of the University. The material was originally formed of second-hand Düwag trams from Köln, although there had initially been talk of acquiring saloon trams from Nürnberg. By the time Konya had finally made its decision – one tram had already been repainted in red – they all went to Krakow instead. Between 1989 and 2004 61 double-articulated trams from Köln were acquired. It was a sensible decision to buy these larger trams considering the amount of traffic on the line. From 2015 they have been replaced by sixty ForCity low-floor trams from Skoda which run in pairs. This is bidirectional stock, even though there are reversing loops at each end.

Two of the Köln trams have been rebuilt inside to carry up to fifteen bicycles and are still in use; The 'Bisiklet Tramvayı' make some six return trips to the university. Twenty were sent to Sarajevo as a gift and most of the rest stand stored on the depot area. There are plans for more tramlines, for which they could perhaps still be used as a temporary solution. Another plan is to replace the current main route by a metro. Should this occur, the Skoda low-floor material could then be transferred to other lines.

In 2015 a short (4.5km) second line was added from Alaaddin to Adliye in the east of the city. Since this line runs past the Mevlana Mausoleum annexe museum, it runs without overhead catenary for some 2km in this section. The halts here are also very basic without any shelters or automats. One enters at the front by the driver. For this line twelve ForCity trams were acquired with batteries. These are also bidirectional design, which is necessary here due to the stub terminus at Adliye. Near this end point a second depot has been built but it is not yet in use.

f) **ANKARA** For the sake of completeness: The capital (almost 6M inhabitants) has no tramways as such but since recently there is a pleasure line through a park, named Baskent Millet Bahçesi. Two Gotha 4-wheel trams from the DDR work this line which came here via Istanbul and Bursa. The line has no overhead catenary and the trams actually work from batteries.

### CITIES WITH A METRO

g) **ANKARA** has had a Metro network since 1997 and currently there are two lines, M and M4. The strange numbering is thanks to the fact

that the current M1 was initially operated in three sections as M1, M2 and M3. The system began with eighteen trainsets from UTDC (a predecessor of Bombardier) derived from that used in Toronto. The majority of the fleet now comprises sets from the Chinese constructor CRRC Zhuzhou (54 6-car trains); since 1996 there is also a Metro line with smaller profile, named the "Ankaray", and here eleven 2-car sets from AnsaldoBreda work, coupled in sets of three.

h) ISTANBUL now has ten Metro lines – M1 to M9 plus express metro M11 to the new (third) airport. The network now has almost 200km and there are plans for further expansion. Line M1 has material of small profile and uses overhead, all others have large profile and use third-rail supply. The material comes from various manufacturers (Alstom, CAF, Hyundai Eurotem, CRRC Zhuzhou). At the end of 2023 a series was also under construction by Bozankaya.

i) BURSA has a Metro line first opened in 2002 and subsequently extended in stages and with two branches at the western end. Current length is almost 40km. There are forty-eight Stadtbahn B sets from Siemens, thirty Flexity Swift from Bombardier (a variant of the U-Bahn sets for Frankfurt/M) and sixty two-car sets from Durmazlar. Also still owned are the Rotterdam express tram sets of Type SG2. Of the 44 sets acquired some 25 were rebuilt and were used for a period, but the 'downchoppers' which reduce the 1500V current in the catenary to 750V do not function well. They have therefore been set aside for some time.

j) IZMIR has had a Metro line since 2000, now 20km long; an extension and a second line are under construction. The material is 2.65m wide and comprises 45 two-car sets from ABB-Adtranz, 42 from CSR and 95 from CRRC Tangshan. Normally four sets run coupled together.

k) ADANA (1.8M inhabitants) also has a Metro line, some 13.5km long and mostly running above ground. Material is from Hyundai Eurotem (36 2-car sets, coupled in sets of three). The same material runs in Istanbul on line T4 which is, as already stated, almost more of a metro than a tramline.

l) There has been talk of plans for trams in more cities – including Diyarbakir, Trabzon (where laying a first line of 8km should start soon), Alanya and Mersin. Due to the rapid growth in population Alanya seems likely to start but the current difficult financial situation and the needs to restore damage caused by the earthquake and the high inflation are also factors."

#### (iv) NEW LINES TO INDUSTRIAL AREAS

From 'R.G.I.' 17.09.24: "Projects to connect major industrial and agricultural production zones to the national rail network are set to be included in the 2025 Presidential Investment Programme, with construction tenders to be opened in the next six months."

#### (v). PROGRESS RAIL.

From 'R.G.I.' 27.09.24: "Progress Rail and Borusan Cat have signed a memorandum of understanding to work together on upcoming projects supporting the railways in Turkey and nearby regions. Potential projects include in-country locomotive services and overhaul, engine and control system upgrades and locos sales and delivery."

#### (vi). TURKISH FIRM TO CONSTRUCT RAILWAY IN UGANDA

from 'R.G.I.' 14.10.24: "Uganda signs contract for Standard Gauge Railway

The government of Uganda signed a contract on October 14 with Turkish firm Yapi Merkezi to build the 272km \$US 3Bn first phase of the country's Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) project.

The contract signing took place in the Ugandan capital of Kampala with works ministry permanent secretary, Mr Bageya Waiswa, representing the government and vice-chairman, Mr Erdem Arioglu, representing Yapi Merkezi.

Uganda's minister of works and transport, General Edward Katumba Wamala, and the Turkish ambassador to Uganda, Mr Fatih Ak, also

attended. Waiswa said at the signing ceremony that the SGR project will stimulate trade and reduce transport costs. Construction of the first phase is due to start in November, and is scheduled to take 48 months to complete, according to project coordinator, Mr Perez Wamburu.

In January 2023 Uganda cancelled a \$US 2.3Bn deal signed with China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) in 2014 to build the first phase of the SGR project from Kampala to the Kenyan border town of Malaba. It then signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Yapı Merkezi, which is building the fourth phase of Tanzania's SGR project, the 165km Tabora - Isaka line. According to Waiswa, Uganda will use its own capital as well as credit from export credit organisations to finance the SGR project, which is planned to deliver a total of 1700 km of new electrified line."

(vii). PRIVATE FREIGHT OPERATOR From 'R.G.I.' 28.10.24: "Pasifik Eurasia has operated Turkey's first privately-run international freight train, which left Istanbul for Budapest on October 18." A photo shows this headed by E68.006.

#### (viii). ADARAY SUBURBAN SERVICE OPENS

From 'Metro Report Intl.' : "14.11.2024: Republic Day on October 29 was marked by launch of Adaray suburban services between the city of Adapazarı and Arifiye, over an 8.5 km branch from the Istanbul – Ankara main line."

#### (ix). MARMARAY TO BE EXTENDED

From 'R.G.I.' 25.11.24: "Plans to extend the Marmaray suburban rail service to Cerkezköy 75 km west of Istanbul have been announced by Minister for Transport & Infrastructure Abdulkadir Uraloglu."

## B. JORDAN

#### (i). NEW RAILWAY NETWORK PLANNED

Barely had the last issue gone to press when this information appeared in 'Lok Report':

"The Ministry of Investment of the United Arab Emirates and the Ministry of Investment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan signed an investment memorandum on 05.09.2024 to establish a framework for cooperation in the railroad sector. Under this agreement, Etihad Rail will undertake the design, construction and operation of a railroad line in Jordan. As part of the cooperation between the two ministries, Etihad Rail signed an agreement with the Jordanian Ministry of Transportation and two memorandums of understanding with the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company.

The aim is to build, develop and operate a 360-kilometre Jordanian railroad network connecting phosphate and potash mines with the port of Aqaba. In addition, the company signed two other letters of intent with the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company to transport 16 million tons of phosphate and potash annually from the mines to the port of Aqaba via the Jordanian railroad network.

Under the patronage of Prime Minister Dr. Bishr Al-Khasawneh, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates signed four agreements on Wednesday for a USD 2.5 Billion (EUR 2.1 Billion) railroad project that will connect the port of Aqaba with the mining areas of Al-Shidiya and Ghor Al-Safi. The project is part of a package of investment projects signed between Jordan and the UAE in the presence of His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, late last year in 2023, worth approximately USD 5.5 Billion (EUR 5.0 Billion).

Prime Minister Dr. Bishr Al-Khasawneh pointed out that the signed documents provide an integrated framework for cooperation in the railroad sector and will contribute to the transfer of technical know-how and skills in the fields of railroad construction and operation. The Prime Minister pointed out that this project requires five years to start the actual operation of the railroad, i.e. in 2030, and that in the current year

2024 and by the end of 2025, the necessary detailed studies on the track facilities and the requirements for the handling of potash and phosphate will be completed, and the aim is to hold tenders for the construction works in early 2026. The Prime Minister thanked the Jordanian phosphate and potash companies for their constructive cooperation during the negotiations on this project and praised the cooperation with Etihad Railways from the UAE.

The Prime Minister pointed out that talks are underway with the Emirati 'brothers' to revive the idea of establishing a land port in Ma'an. He noted that it may be too early to talk comprehensively about this project, but the railroad project lays a foundation for the re-establishment of the land port in Ma'an to serve the logistics network and transportation sector in the Kingdom.

Construction of the project is expected to take five years and actual operation of the railroad will begin in 2030. In 2024 and 2025, detailed studies will be carried out on the track facilities and the requirements for handling potash and phosphate, and tenders for the construction work will be issued in early 2026. This important project extends from Aqaba Phosphate Port and Industrial Port towards Wadi Al-Yutum and then across two tracks, one towards Al-Shidiya and the other towards Ghor Al-Safi through Wadi Araba, connecting key mining areas to the Industrial Port and Phosphate Port, improving the efficiency of logistics and exports, and creating direct and indirect employment opportunities in transportation, railroads, mining and related sectors.

According to the investment memorandum between the two ministries, the railroad infrastructure will be upgraded, including the manufacture and supply of a train fleet that meets the highest international standards. The project also includes the construction of loading and unloading terminals for various mineral products in Aqaba, Ghor Al-Safi and Al-Shidiya. These terminals will facilitate the efficient handling and transportation of minerals and ensure more seamless and efficient logistics and export operations. The project also includes the maintenance, repair and operation of the rail network.

His Excellency Mohamed Hassan Alsuwaidi, UAE Minister of Investment, said: "The investment memorandum with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan demonstrates our commitment to leveraging our collective and bilateral efforts to drive economic growth while strengthening resilience and promoting economic diversification in our two brotherly countries. By enhancing capabilities and sharing technical expertise, we aim to build new economic and investment relationships that support infrastructure development and promote promising opportunities as part of our vision to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth. This collaborative partnership is in line with our overarching vision to build a robust and innovative rail network that meets and exceeds global standards, setting the stage for future progress and prosperity in the region."

The Prime Minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr. Bisher Al-Khasawneh, emphasized during the signing ceremony, which was also attended by the Emirati Minister of Investment, H.E. Mohamed Hassan Alsuwaidi, that this important strategic investment project underlines the deep and friendly ties between the two nations. He emphasized that these ties are nurtured and supported by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. Dr. Al-Khasawneh said: "Today we signed investment agreements worth USD 2.3 Billion (EUR 2.1 Billion) from the Emirates to connect the port of Aqaba with the mining areas in Al-Shidiya and Ghor Al-Safi." He pointed out that these agreements, along with a series of investment initiatives, are part of a broader Memorandum of Understanding, agreement and series of investment initiatives that Jordan signed with the UAE in November 2023. This set of investment initiatives, witnessed by His Majesty King Abdullah II and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, total approximately USD 5.5 Billion (EUR 5.0 Billion).

The Prime Minister thanked the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company for their constructive engagement during the negotiation phase of this project. He also praised the cooperation with the Etihad Rail Company of the United Arab Emirates.

The Prime Minister mentioned ongoing discussions with Emirati partners to revisit the idea of establishing a dry port in Ma'an. He noted that while it is premature to discuss this project in detail, the railroad initiative lays the foundation for the re-establishment of the Dry Port in Ma'an and improves the logistics network and transportation sector in the Kingdom. He also announced the continuation of cooperation with partners from the Emirates, which will benefit both countries, emphasizing that the two nations act as "one body and one mind". This relationship is strengthened by the strategic and historical ties between their leaderships and peoples and serves as a model for an exemplary Arab relationship.

His Excellency Shadi Malak, CEO of Etihad Rail, said: "The agreements and memoranda of understanding signed by Etihad Rail reaffirm our continued commitment to strengthening our presence in the region. This strategic vision is made possible by the unwavering support of our wise leadership and the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of Etihad Rail. We are keen to leverage our proven expertise in developing and operating the UAE's national rail network to support the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's ambitious plans to boost its rail infrastructure and spur economic growth. This is in line with the strong and cooperative relationship between our two nations, particularly in implementing joint projects in the transportation and infrastructure sectors that are mutually beneficial to our nations."

The Jordanian railroad network project being implemented by Etihad Rail in Jordan is characterized by its strategic connection between phosphate and potash mines and the port of Aqaba - a major port in the Red Sea region. Strategically located between Europe, Asia and Africa, the port plays a crucial role in the development of Jordan's economy as it handles most imports and exports to and from the Hashemite Kingdom, including products from the mining industry such as rock phosphate and potash, which are among the country's most abundant natural resources.

Since its establishment in the UAE, Etihad Rail has been responsible for the construction, development and operation of the UAE's national rail network for freight and passenger transportation and is a key part of the "Projects of the 50", the largest initiative to strengthen the Union for the next fifty years. Since 2016 the company has been operating a line that transports granulated sulphur from gas production fields in Shah and Habshan to export points in the port of Ruwais. In 2023, the UAE's national rail network was inaugurated and freight train operations in the UAE commenced. In addition, Etihad Rail continues to make progress in developing its passenger services to operate on the same network in the future.

Etihad Rail has achieved notable success in its efforts to enhance cooperation with neighbouring countries in the rail transport sector. This is demonstrated by the UAE-Oman rail network project being implemented by Etihad Rail, Oman Rail and Mubadala Investment Company through a joint venture company, Hafeet Rail. This joint network will help strengthen the UAE and Oman's position as logistics hubs in the region and enhance their role as gateways to regional markets.

This investment memorandum follows a USD 2 Billion agreement signed by the UAE and Jordan in 2023, establishing a framework for investment cooperation in key areas such as infrastructure and development. The UAE is one of the largest foreign investors in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and has invested around USD 22.5 Billion in various key sectors of the country's economy over the past 10 years."

## WKZ, source Etihad Rail, Jordan Phosphate Mines Company

(ii). This is partly repetitive of the above but we include it as a separate item since it gives a different perspective.

UAE AND JORDAN SIGN INVESTMENT MEMORANDUM to Strengthen Cooperation in the Railway Sector The memorandum aims to build

capacity and facilitate exchange of knowledge, skills, and technical expertise. Under this memorandum, Etihad Rail will undertake the design,

resilience and promoting economic diversification in both of our brotherly nations. Through enhancing capabilities and sharing technical expertise, we aim to establish new economic and investment connections that support infrastructure development and foster promising opportunities, all within the framework of our vision to achieve comprehensive and sustainable economic growth.”



H.E. added: “This collaborative partnership aligns with our overarching vision to construct a robust and innovative railway network that meets and exceeds global standards, thereby setting the stage for future advancements and prosperity in the region.”

The Prime Minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr. Bisher Al-Khasawneh, highlighted during the signing ceremony, which was also attended by the Emirati Minister of Investment, H.E. Mohamed Hassan Alsuwaidi, that this significant strategic investment project underscores the deep and amicable bond between the two nations. He emphasised that these ties are nurtured and supported by His

construction, and operation of a railway line in Jordan. As part of the cooperation between the two ministries, Etihad Rail signed an agreement with the Jordanian Ministry of Transport, and two MoUs with the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company.

Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates.

The Ministry of Investment of the UAE and the Ministry of Investment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan have signed an Investment Memorandum, to establish a framework for cooperation in the railway sector. The memorandum aims to enhance capabilities and facilitate the exchange of knowledge, skills, and technical expertise between the two countries.

Dr Al-Khasawneh stated: “Today, we signed Emirati investment agreements valued at US\$2.3 Billion to connect the Port of Aqaba with the mining areas in Al-Shidiya and Ghor Al-Safi.” He noted that these agreements, along with the series of investment initiatives, are part of a broader memorandum of understanding, agreement, and series of investment initiatives that Jordan signed with the UAE in November 2023. This series of investment initiatives, witnessed by His Majesty King Abdullah II and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, totals approximately US\$5.5 Billion.

As part of the cooperation between the two ministries, Etihad Rail, the developer and operator of the UAE National Railway Network, signed an agreement with the Jordanian Ministry of Transport to facilitate the implementation of railway projects in Jordan, with the aim of building, developing, and operating a Jordanian railway network spanning 360 kilometres, linking phosphate and potash mines to the Port of Aqaba. Furthermore, the company signed two additional MoUs with Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and Arab Potash Company to transport 16 million tonnes of phosphate and potash annually from mining sites to the Port of Aqaba via the Jordanian railway network.

He added, “We are always pleased with the enduring strategic partnership and close fraternal ties between Jordan and the UAE, which reflect the strong bond between His Majesty King Abdullah II and his brother, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.” He emphasised that the signing of these agreements symbolises the deep fraternal and strategic relations between the two nations and serves the mutual interests of both sides.

This strategic connection aims to create a transformative shift in the transportation of essential materials, enhance export capabilities, and improve logistical efficiency, thus, creating job opportunities in the transport and mining sectors, and contributing to economic development in the Kingdom.

He highlighted that the signed agreements form a comprehensive cooperative framework in the railway sector, aimed at transferring technical expertise and skills related to railway construction and operation. The Prime Minister noted that the project will take five years to commence actual operations, projected for 2030. Detailed studies on railway tracks and the handling requirements for potash and phosphate will be completed by the end of 2025, with the goal of issuing bids for construction work in early 2026.

Under the Investment Memorandum between the two ministries, the railway infrastructure will be developed, including the manufacturing and supply of a fleet of trains designed to the highest international standards. The project will also include the construction of loading and unloading terminals for various mineral products in Aqaba, Ghor Al Safi, and Shidiya. These terminals will facilitate the efficient handling and transportation of minerals, creating more seamless and efficient logistics and export operations. Additionally, the project will comprise maintenance, repair, and operation of the railway network.

He explained that the establishment of this railway will greatly enhance our logistical and export capabilities, starting with a capacity of 16 million tons of phosphate and potash products. He highlighted that this crucial project for the Kingdom will connect major mining sites with the industrial port and phosphate port, extending to Wadi Al-Yatam in Aqaba. Additionally, it will improve logistical efficiency and export processes, creating new job opportunities across various fields, including logistics, mining, railways, and other related sectors.

His Excellency Mohamed Hassan Alsuwaidi, Minister of Investment of the UAE, said: “The Investment Memorandum with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan showcases our commitment to leveraging our collective and bilateral efforts to drive economic growth, while enhancing

Dr Al-Khasawneh also highlighted that the railway route will commence at the phosphate port and the industrial port in Aqaba, extending northward to Wadi Al-Yatam and then to Shidiya. Another route will brand westward from Wadi Al-Yatam to Ghor Al Safi through

Wadi Araba. He noted that this project will be implemented under the Jordanian Investment Fund Law and will require five years to be completed.

The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company for their constructive engagement during the negotiation phase of this project. He also commended the cooperation shown by the UAE's Etihad Rail Company.

He further extended his thanks to the Emirati partners for their interest in Jordan's investment environment in general, and in the transport and railway sectors in particular. This interest builds upon the many existing Emirati investments, some of which are set to come to fruition soon in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone.

The Prime Minister mentioned ongoing discussions with Emirati partners about revisiting the idea of establishing a dry port in Ma'an. He noted that while it may be premature to discuss this project extensively, the railway initiative lays the groundwork for re-establishing the dry port in Ma'an, enhancing the logistics network and the transport sector in the Kingdom.

He also announced the continuation of collaboration with the Emirati partners, which will benefit both countries, emphasising that the two nations operate as 'one body and one mind'. This relationship is strengthened by the strategic and historical ties between their leaderships and peoples, serving as a model for exemplary Arab relation.

His Excellency Shadi Malak, CEO of Etihad Rail, said: "The agreements and MoUs signed by Etihad Rail reinforce our ongoing commitment to strengthening our presence in the region. This strategic vision is made possible by the unwavering support of our wise leadership and the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of Etihad Rail. We are keen to leverage our proven expertise in developing and operating the UAE National Railway Network to support the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's ambitious plans for advancing its rail infrastructure and driving economic growth. This aligns with the strong and cooperative relationship between our two nations, particularly in the implementation of joint projects in the transport and infrastructure sectors, which are mutually beneficial to our nations."

The Jordanian railway network project, which will be implemented by Etihad Rail in Jordan, is characterised by its strategic connection between phosphate and potash mines and the Port of Aqaba – a major port in the Red Sea region. Strategically located between Europe, Asia, and Africa, the port plays a pivotal role in the development of the Jordanian economy, handling most imports and exports to and from the Hashemite Kingdom, including products from the mining industries such as raw phosphate and potash, which are among the most abundant natural resources in the country.

Since its establishment in the UAE, Etihad Rail has been responsible for building, developing, and operating the UAE National Railway Network for freight and passenger transport, and constitutes a key part of the "Projects of the 50," the largest initiative to solidify the strength of the Union for the next fifty years. Since 2016, the company has been operating a route, transporting granulated sulfur from gas production fields in

Shah and Habshan to export points at Ruwais Port. In 2023, the UAE National Railway Network was inaugurated, and freight train operations were launched across the UAE. Furthermore, Etihad Rail continues to make progress in developing its passenger transport services, which will operate on the same network in the future.

Etihad Rail has achieved remarkable success in its efforts to enhance cooperation with neighboring countries in the rail transport sector. This is evident through the UAE-Oman Railway Network project, which is being implemented by Etihad Rail, Oman Rail, and Mubadala Investment Company through a joint venture company, Hafeet Rail. This joint network will contribute to strengthening the position of the UAE and Oman as logistical hubs in the region and enhance their role as gateways to regional markets.

This Investment Memorandum follows a US\$2 Billion agreement signed by the UAE and Jordan in 2023, establishing a framework for investment cooperation in key areas such as infrastructure and development.

The UAE is one of the largest foreign investors in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, having invested about US\$ 22.5 Billion into various key sectors of the country's economy over the past 10 years.

### (iii). HEDJAZ EXCURSIONS

On 25. & 26. October 2024 the 'Jordanian Reserve Railway Corporation' (a new title to us) was advertising on Facebook "Excursions from Amman main station to to Gizeh opposite the Queen Alia Airport. Bookings by phone under 0799053016."

The link :

<https://www.facebook.com/JordanHejazRailway/videos/428906683563731/?rclid=jk5noOFFwR0akFT>

brings one to a brief video of a diesel-hauled train departing Amman station.

Also this link has many JHR photos by Richard Ashby:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/narrowgauge/posts/27963507466567916/>

- Photo - Hedjaz Excursion



## C. U.A.E.

### (i). HAFEET RAIL. This is a new name on the block - a joint enterprise between Etihad Rail of the UAE and Oman:

(a). "Hafeet Rail signs contract with Progress Rail to supply a modern fleet of freight locomotives. New agreement aligns with plans to develop the Omani-Emirati railway network to connect both countries via a safe and sustainable network. Locomotives are designed to withstand the region's unique climatic and geographical conditions.

Abu Dhabi, UAE, 11 October 2024: Hafeet Rail, the developer and operator of the UAE-Oman Rail Network, has partnered with Progress Rail, a Caterpillar company, to supply 27 state-of-the-art EMD SD70ACS heavy-haul freight locomotives. The locomotives will be custom designed to withstand the region's unique environmental conditions while adhering to the highest global standards of safety, security, sustainability, and environmental protection. This took place during the inaugural Global Rail Transport Infrastructure Exhibition & Conference (Global Rail) 2024.

Commenting on the announcement, Ahmad Al Musawa Al Hashmi, CEO of Hafeet Rail, said: "This partnership reaffirms our commitment to developing and operating a state-of-the-art railway network equipped with cutting-edge heavy-haul freight locomotives that meet international benchmarks. Additionally, our fleet is tailored to comply with GCC Railway Network standards, paving the way for efficient and streamlined freight movement between Oman and the UAE in the future."

"We are keen on forging partnerships that resonate with our mission to provide competitive freight solutions across the joint network. This initiative is poised to boost regional trade and unlock new prospects in the infrastructure, transportation, and logistics sectors of both countries, thereby enhancing economic diversification and fostering sustainable growth", he added.

John Newman, President and CEO for Progress Rail, said: "The GCC is geographically, financially and economically important on a global scale, and the UAE has been a driving contributor to the region's growth. We are proud to have been selected to work with Hafeet Rail to further connect Oman and the UAE. Progress Rail has developed strong trust and relationships with our business partners in the GCC through decades of investment in products, technologies and local teams. We greatly appreciate our relationship with Hafeet Rail and are looking forward to continuing our support of our customers' growth in the GCC region."

The joint rail network's new fleet boasts high-powered engines designed to haul a diverse range of cargo. These trains, each approximately two kilometers long, will transport various railcars carrying bulk materials, containers, petrochemicals, metallic products, and other industrial goods. These locomotives will ensure the safe, secure, and efficient movement of trains across the Oman-UAE railway network, meeting the needs of Hafeet Rail's customers once the network becomes operational.

The 27 locomotives are equipped with high-performance engines and advanced filtration technologies, including pulse and sand filtration systems, as well as carbon emission reduction technologies, aligning with Hafeet Rail's commitment to environmental sustainability and carbon reduction.

Progress Rail's extensive experience in the railway sector, especially within the GCC, has enabled them to understand the region's specific requirements, allowing them to provide advanced locomotives tailored to the local conditions, in addition to its significant global presence, serving numerous countries worldwide.

The signing of the contract for supplying the new fleet of locomotives follows the awarding of the main contracts, the contracts for the systems and technology to be used in the project, as well as the commencement of preparatory work to develop the UAE-Oman railway network. This underscores Hafeet Rail's commitment to accelerating the progress of completing the first rail connection in the GCC.

Hafeet Rail is a joint venture between Etihad Rail, Oman Rail, and Mubadala. Named after Jebel Hafeet, which links Oman and the UAE, the company operates under the guidance of both nations' leaderships to enhance their longstanding historical ties, aiming for unparalleled economic and commercial integration, and fostering strong social and cultural bonds."

(b). This account came from Railfreight.com thanks to Iain Scotchman:

"The Omani-Emirati joint venture Hafeet Rail is purchasing 27 new heavy-haul freight locomotives from Progress Rail. The deal now comes after the joint venture secured 1.5 Billion dollars in funding for the infrastructure project, which is supposed to connect Oman and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) via rail.

As part of the deal, Hafeet Rail is purchasing 27 EMD SD70ACS locomotives to be used on the future rail line, and are reportedly adapted to the arid climate of the region.

"This partnership reaffirms our commitment to developing and operating the railway network equipped with cutting-edge heavy-haul freight locomotives that meet international benchmarks. Additionally, our fleet is tailored to comply with GCC Railway Network standards, paving the way for efficient and streamlined freight movement between Oman and the UAE in the future," said Ahmad Al Musawa Al Hashmi, CEO of Hafeet Rail.

"We are keen on forging partnerships that resonate with our mission to provide competitive freight solutions across the joint network. This initiative is poised to boost regional trade and unlock new prospects in the infrastructure, transportation, and logistics sectors of both countries, thereby enhancing economic diversification and fostering sustainable growth", the CEO added.

### Hafeet Rail

Hafeet Rail, a joint venture between Etihad Rail, Mubadala, and Asyad Group, will be 238 kilometres long and is supposed to connect five major ports and industrial zones across the UAE and Oman. In the future, an extended connection to Oman's capital city Muscat is planned as well.

The rail project, which was previously named Omani & Etihad Rail Company but changed its name in the spring of 2024, is part of a wider effort to develop rail infrastructure in the Gulf region and to connect all six Gulf Cooperation Council member states.

### Over a Billion Dollars in funding

Earlier, Hafeet Rail secured 1.5 Billion dollars out of 2.5 Billion dollars in necessary funding. The 1.5 Billion dollar funding for the project reportedly comes from Emirati, Omani and regional banks, as well as banks from the wider world, including Jordan, Kuwait and the UK.

The funding for the rail line comes amid signs of ample demand for the project. As early as August 2023, a steel company signed up as a customer, even though preparatory works for the rail line only start in May of 2024. In both the UAE and Oman, the development of rail freight infrastructure is a recent phenomenon."

*See photo / map next page...*

### (ii). HIGH SPEED LINK ABU DHABI AND DUBAI

From 'R.G.I.' 16.10.24: "Etihad Rail is considering prequalification bids to design and build the first phase of a high-speed network in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A 150km line will link Abu Dhabi with Dubai.

Further development of the network will include up to 10 stations in Abu Dhabi and new lines between Abu Dhabi and Al-Ain and Dubai and Sharjah. Trains are expected to operate on the new lines at up to 320km/h. The network will include 31km of tunnels.



The first phase is scheduled to open in 2030, with stations at Abu Dhabi Al-Zahiyah, Saadiyat Island, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi Airport, and Dubai Al-Jaddaf. The new line will include underground, elevated and at-grade sections and will provide a journey time of 30 minutes between Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The likely cost of the high-speed network has not been disclosed.

Preliminary ground testing for the first phase has begun, with Matcon Testing Laboratory in Dubai and Engineering & Research International from Abu Dhabi investigating the terrain and soil conditions along the proposed route, together with engineering consultants Sener and Ineco.

Ethiad Rail currently operates freight trains on the conventional rail network in the UAE, totalling 1,200km. A public passenger service was expected to commence this year, with a journey time of just under 1 hour scheduled for trains running between Abu Dhabi and Dubai, although no date for this has yet been confirmed. Construction began earlier this year on a new conventional line that will link the UAE with Oman, which is being developed by Hafet Rail, a joint venture of Ethiad Rail and Oman Rail."

- See photo right.....

**(iii). DUBAI METRO**

I 'I.R.J.' 12.11.2024: "Dubai's Road and Transport Authority



(RTA) has received updated bids from contractors seeking to win the contract to design, build and equip the planned 30km Blue Line metro in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Shortlisted contractors were asked to submit revised bids after submitting their initial offers last month. The Middle East Economic Digest reports the value of the offers from the four

remaining consortia as follows:

- CAF; China Tiesiju Civil Engineering Group; Arab Contractors, Egypt: Dirhams 22.2bn (\$US 5.99Bn)
- CRRC; Limak Holding, Turkey; Mapa Group, Turkey: Dirhams 22.7Bn
- Hitachi; Larsen & Toubro, India; Powerchina; Wade Adams, UAE: Dirhams 23.9Bn, and
- Alstom; FCC, Spain; China State Construction Engineering Corporation: Dirhams 23.96Bn

These bids remain above RTA's estimated cost of Dirhams 18bn (\$US 4.9bn), announced when it invited expressions of interest in the project.

The Blue Line will comprise a 15.5km underground section reaching a maximum depth of 70m, and a 14.5km elevated section. The line will have 14 stations, including nine elevated and five underground, and will serve the existing Centrepoint and Creek stations, the termini of the Red and Green lines, respectively.

The line will have capacity for 56,000 passengers per hour in both directions, with trains operating at intervals of around 90s. The Blue line will serve an area with a population of more than one million, including major locations such as Dubai Creek Harbour, Dubai Festival City, International City, Al Rashidiya, Al Warqa, Mirdif, Dubai Silicon Oasis, and Dubai Academic City.

The chosen contractor will be responsible for all civil and electromechanical works, the supply of 28 driverless trains and rail systems, and provide assistance with maintenance and operation for an initial three-year period. The contract also includes the construction of a depot to accommodate up to 60 trains, and the construction of all associated roads, facilities and utility diversion works.

RTA had hoped to award the contract this year, with tunnelling expected to commence in 2025. Trial operation was scheduled for 2028, ahead of the line's entry into passenger service in 2029."

## PROGRESS IN KUWAIT

From 'I.R.J.' 14.11.2024: "Kuwait's Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has opened four financial bids for a 12-month contract tendered by the Public Authority for Roads & Transportation (PART) to provide design services for a 111km railway between Kuwait City and the border with Saudi Arabia. This will form the northern section of the ambitious railway project being promoted by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which would see over 2000km of new lines built at a cost of over \$US 200bn to connect Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Oman.

According to local media, Proyapi Engineering and Consulting of Turkey made the lowest bid of Dinars 2.47M (\$US 8.15M) for the contract, while China Railway Company offered Dinars 6.77M. The other bidders were Sener of Spain (Dinars 8.82M) and Systra Turkey (Dinars 9.73M).

Nine companies had sought to prequalify for the contract, but five were excluded. Design and consultancy work is due to be completed within 12 months, after which tenders will be issued for construction work.

PART vice-president, Ms Haifa Al-Jaralla, says that tendering has been expedited following meetings between Kuwait's minister of public works, Dr Noura Al-Mashaan, and Saudi Arabia's minister of transport and logistics services, Mr Saleh Al-Jasser, which included reviewing the feasibility for a new line between Kuwait City and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia.

Appointing the design consultant forms the first phase of the railway project, Al-Jarallah said. The second phase includes presenting the project to investors and selecting an investment partner, with the third phase focusing project implementation which is expected to take 30 months to complete. The new railway to the Saudi border is one of the largest projects in Kuwait's 2035 national development plan, which aims to transform the country into a global commercial and economic hub. Kuwait's portion of the GCC project is expected to be completed in late 2030."





## D. IRAQ

### IRAQ - TURKEY ROUTE DESIGN WORK FINISHED

From "I.R.J." 18.09.2024: "Design work on the \$US 17Bn Development Road project to create a new 1,200km double-track passenger and freight railway between the Grand Port at Al Faw in Iraq and the Turkish border has been finalised. Mr Nasser Al-Asadi, Transport Affairs advisor to the Iraqi Prime Minister, confirmed that this stage of the project is now complete on September 6. In a statement to the Iraqi News Agency (INA), Al-Asadi explained that construction of the new line will incorporate cutting-edge technology and that artificial intelligence (AI) will play a significant role in the project. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in Baghdad on April 22 between Iraq, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar to cooperate on the project."

## E. EGYPT

### (i). CAIRO METRO.

"The National Authority for Tunnels has awarded a €850M contract for renovation of Cairo Metro's Line 1 to a consortium led by Colas Rail with Orascom Construction and Hitachi Rail."



### (ii). SIGN LANGUAGE ON METRO

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 04.10.2024: "Operator RATP Dev is trialling sign language services on the Capital Train line which connects Cairo with the New Administrative Capital. Instructional videos with sign language translation will be available at ticket offices and on platforms at Adly Mansour station, enabling passengers with hearing impairments to access information about trains, ticket prices and other services."

'We are committed to ensuring our services are available to all, without any exceptions', said Wadii Bouchiha, CEO of RATP Dev Mobility Cairo, on September 27. 'By incorporating sign language, we are taking a crucial step towards fostering a more inclusive community.' RATP Dev Mobility Cairo also trains its staff in sign language and has appointed



sign language ambassadors to offer additional support."

### (iii). THE ALEXANDRIA TRAMS

In the Dutch magazine 'Op de Rails' 6/2023 p 305-307 is an article by Maurits van den Toorn on the Tramway system in this city. (Translation by the Editor).

"Alexandria on the Mediterranean is the second city in Egypt and exists since 331 BC, established by order of Alexander the Great. It is the major harbour of the country and officially it has six million inhabitants; in fact the number is probably much larger. For a long time the city was inhabited largely by Europeans, mainly Greeks and to a lesser extent Italians and the large number of

churches is a reminder of this. The Nationalisation in the period of Colonel Nasser (1054-1970) meant that most of the Europeans left the country.

At present the city has the only remaining tramway in Egypt. There is just the one administration, the Alexandria Passenger Transport Authority, but in fact two separate systems: an urban network in the inner city and a light-rail line from Raml (Ramleh) on the eastern side of the city along the coast to El Nasr. All are standard gauge but have different characters.

The Ramleh line running along the coast was a British initiative and dates from 1863 as a horse tramway and is therefore one of the oldest tramlines in the world. After it had used steam traction for a period at the end of the 19th century it was electrified in 1903. The line is around 15km long and partway the tracks separate but come together again further on. It was always a suburban line to a number of villa settlements along the coast although nowadays the whole area has been built up with multi-storey blocks. The trams are frequent although it is not always quite clear which tram follows which route. Even the number of cars parked on the lines is no indication of disuse for the fact is the blown sand can quickly cover the rails.

Tram travel is a difficult affair for the trams have to push their way through the chaotic traffic. There are hardly any sections of separate trackbed. In practice this means that there is no form of any timetable; after waiting for some time, with growing doubt as to whether anything will come at all, suddenly three or four trams can arrive together! According to a report of 2020 there should be some fourteen city routes, including a number of short-distance runs. This is hard to verify, for the line numbers and destination blinds have in the meantime been removed. Experienced users see or hear from their fellow travellers where the tram is headed.

The trams are not totally packed as they were before; the majority of travellers have sought other solutions and found them in the many thousands of minibuses and Bayays (Indonesian three-wheelers) which can slalom their way safely through the traffic. The fact that the tram works at all under these conditions indicates that it may act largely as a form of providing employment. One can ask oneself for how long the city will continue to have the finances for this.

Successive modernisation plans (also the HTM from The Hague was involved in a survey) have led to nothing. Repeatedly-announced purchases of low-floor trams have likewise not provided any result. But not all is misery. The tracks over which the Ramleh trams ride through the city have been overhauled with French financing. The tracks lie in fairly broad roads running parallel to the coast which helps to reduce the amount of obstruction from car traffic.

### Rolling Stock

The backbone of the tramway stock remains the Düwag trams which were bought practically-new but second-hand from Copenhagen in the late 1960's and early 1970's when the tramway here was abandoned. They are therefore more than half a century old. Of the 99 trams which once worked many still work but an exact counting is impossible. Some trams may look operational but have had equipment dismantled in the depots to keep others working. Some of the Düwags have received a sort of extension front and back of plastic to form some sort of 'crumple zone' and protect the bodywork.

In the 1980's the Düwags were supplemented with fifteen motor-and-driving trailer sets from the Japanese firm Kinki Sharyo and later with fifteen similar sets from Ganz-Mávag in Hungary. It could be just coincidence, but in a recent visit very few Ganz trams were to be seen in use. It could well be that the Düwag trams are more robust and are better maintained with the proverbial 'hammer and screwdriver' methods than the more technologically-complex material.

The newest acquisitions are fifteen single-articulated trams with a high floor from the Ukrainian manufacturer Tatra-Yug which were delivered from 2019 (Nos. 701-715). This was the first export success

for this firm. They are used only on the Ramleh line and the connecting urban section. For this they have both a trolley and a pantograph.

On the whole there is no problem with photography. The personnel seem to be enthusiastic and several times I was invited to board and take pictures of the interior.

Conclusion: The Ramleh line will, perhaps in modernised fashion, certainly survive. What will happen to the city network remains an open question. There does not seem to be a lot of future in the current situation – but on the other hand one could have said the same ten or twenty years ago. We probably observe matters with a too-Western perspective."

- Tram in Alexandria (Photo Joyce Rothschild)

### (iii). VELARO HIGH SPEED TRAIN PRESENTATION

From "I.R.J." "Egypt's deputy prime minister, Mr Kamel Al-Wazir, was the guest of honour during the presentation of the first Velaro high-speed train for Egypt at Innotrans on 24.09. . Built by Siemens Mobility, three cars of the eight-car train, the first of 41 for the 2000km high-speed network under construction in Egypt, are on display at the outside track area.

Al-Wazir was joined by members of an Egyptian delegation including chairman of the National Authority for Tunnels, Dr-Eng Tarek Hamed Gewaily, and Dr Osama Bishai, CEO of Orascom, one of the key local contractors. Also onboard the train was Germany's federal transport minister, Dr Volking Wissing, while Siemens was represented by Mobility CEO, Mr Michael Peter, and group CEO, Dr Roland Busch, who said the "government to government" project was a "poster child" for the company and that he wished "there were more" projects of this scale.

Germany is co-financing the construction of the high-speed network and Wissing praised the close collaboration between the two countries on the scheme where construction is making encouraging progress on the 680km Green Line.

The Velaro high-speed train was manufactured at Siemens' Krefeld plant and testing has been taking place at the manufacturer's Wildenrath test circuit. It is hoped that it will be shipped to Egypt in the coming months with delivery held back in order to show the train at this week's trade fair. Siemens says another four Velaro high-speed trains have been manufactured and tested along with five four-car Desiro EMUs. Five Vectron locomotives that will be used for freight services on the network are undergoing commissioning while a further 16 Desiro trains are in various stages of pre-assembly.



The first Desiro EMU was shipped to Egypt in autumn 2023 and has been undergoing static testing close to the New Administrative Capital station construction site where the first sections of track have also been laid. It is hoped that dynamic testing of the train will begin early next year, a key milestone for the project.

- [Photo previous page.](#)

#### (iv) CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

Siemens also offered an update on the project where track laying is underway on track, stations and bridges by local contractors on the Green Line, which runs from Ain Sokhna to Marsa Matrouh via Cairo. Construction is also progressing on the first of six stabling facilities at the New Capital Station. Each will have eight 200m-long tracks and have capacity for three Velaro and seven Desiro trains. Work is similarly progressing on the main depot, which is located west of the Nile, which will accommodate 11 Velaros, 15 Desiros and 13 Vectrons. The depot also features a sizeable maintenance workshop, a central control room overseeing all three lines and training facilities equipped with driving simulators."

#### (v). SINAI LINE REOPENING

From 'I.R.J.' 10.10.2024: "Egyptian National Railways (ENR) has operated its first passenger train to the Sinai Peninsula for over 50 years, with the start of a trial service on the 100km line from Al-Fardan to Bir al-Abd.

This marks the completion of the first phase of renovating the Al-Fardan - Bir al-Abd section of the 500km line connecting Al-Fardan with East Port Said, Bir al-Abd, Arish and Taba. Work has included renewing 22km of track, rehabilitating 64km and restoring 14km. and Bir al-Abd station has been refurbished, together with Qantara East, Galbana, Rummana and Balouza.

Egypt's deputy prime minister for industrial development and minister of industry and transport, Mr Kamel Al-Wazir, had earlier announced that the first freight train had crossed the Suez Canal into Sinai. The train carried 25 40ft containers from the El Dekheila terminal in Alexandria to a terminal near East Port Said where they were transferred to road for final delivery.

According to Al-Wazir, creating a logistics corridor from Arish to Taba will play a key role in developing Sinai, offering substantial economic benefits to the region. Reopening the railway will facilitate the movement of freight between residential, industrial and mining areas, and will enable manufacturers to export via the ports of Arish and Taba."

From 'Egypt Today': 7 October 2024: "For the first time in years, a passenger train has crossed into Sinai as part of Egypt's ongoing efforts to revitalize its transportation infrastructure. The Ministry of Transport has launched a trial operation of the Al-Fardan-Bir al-Abd railway line, stretching 100km in Sinai. The inauguration was overseen by the Deputy Prime Minister for Industrial Development, Minister of Industry and Transport, Kamel al-Wazir, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Transport and the Railway Authority.

This project marks the completion of the first phase in the renovation and development of the Al-Fardan-Bir al-Abd railway, which is part of a larger 500 km rail network linking Al-Fardan, East Port Said,

Bir al-Abd, Arish and Taba. The line is a crucial component of the new Arish-Taba logistical corridor, which aims to boost development across Sinai.

#### Trial Phase and Future Plans for Rail Services in Sinai

The railway line was first reopened for cargo transport, with Minister Kamel al-Wazir announcing on August 6, the successful passage of the first freight train. The train carried 25 transit containers (40 feet each) from Alexandria's Container Terminal in Dekheila to East Port Said via a transfer station located at Kilometer 8, which serves as a cargo exchange point between trains and trucks.

Minister al-Wazir emphasized that the trial phase for freight services will soon be followed by passenger services, marking a significant enhancement in the transport system across Sinai.

He added that the new Arish-Taba logistical corridor will play a key role in comprehensive development efforts in Sinai and offer substantial economic benefits to the region. It is expected to serve the residents of North, Central, and South Sinai.



## National Strategic Importance of the Project

This project is part of the Egyptian government's broader plan to develop Sinai across multiple sectors. The reactivation of the Al-Fardan-Bir al-Abd railway line will contribute to the nation's overall cargo transport system. It will facilitate the transportation of goods between residential, industrial, and mining zones in Sinai, connecting factories to railway links for export through Arish and Taba ports. The new railway line will integrate with Egypt's national rail network, contributing to the realization of developmental goals for the Sinai Peninsula, known as the "Land of Fayrouz." This project represents a significant milestone in improving transportation infrastructure in Sinai, supporting Egypt's long-term vision for the region's economic and social development."

'R.G.I.' for 25.10.24 added: "Travel was free of charge for the first week. Transport Minister Kamel El Wazir said plans to boost transport infrastructure in Sinai include a new line from the coastal city of Arish to Taba on the Gulf of Aqaba. Completion is planned for 2030, stimulating economic growth, increasing local employment and contributing to the development of natural resource extraction and agriculture."

This was in Arabic on Facebook: "Passenger trains are entering North Sinai's Bir al-Abed station for the first time after a 57-year hiatus. The railway line (Al-Fardan - Bir Al-Abd) as well as the East Port Said port link with a total length of 100 km, and the construction of a railway drawbridge over the New Suez Canal and the doubling of the old bridge (Al-Fardan Bridge). Work is currently underway to extend the line to the city of Al-Arish to connect Al-Arish seaport and the airport to the railway network, followed by the construction of a new railway line from Al-Arish to Taba through Central Sinai and the Negev with a total length of 500 km."

## (vi). NEW LINE NORTH-EAST OF CAIRO APPROVED

From 'I.R.J.' 09.10.2024: "The Egyptian cabinet has approved a draft presidential decree authorising construction of 63.5km of new railway to connect Robeiky with 10th of Ramadan City and Belbeis, northeast of Cairo in northern Egypt. The non-electrified line will be single track from Robeiky to 10th of Ramadan City, with provision for a second track to be laid at a later date. The remaining section from 10th of Ramadan City to Belbeis is planned to open with double track in place.

The project is being supported by the French Development Agency (AFD), with the aim of improving the efficiency of freight transport, reducing road congestion and encouraging the development of local industry. By facilitating the movement of freight from inland terminals to seaports, the new line is expected to lower transport costs and enhance the competitiveness of local producers, creating new job opportunities and contributing to economic growth.

In October 2022 the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (ERBD) announced a sovereign loan of up to €40M to Egyptian National Railways (ENR) to partially finance construction of the new line, funding the supply and installation of track, signalling and telecommunications.

ERBD expected that the remaining cost of the €220M project would be financed by an equivalent loan from another financial institution. Although mainly intended to connect the 10th of Ramadan Dry Port (DP10) to the ENR network, EBRD said that the new line would also carry commuter traffic."

## (vii). NEW BASHTEEL MAIN STATION IN CAIRO OPENED

In 'Ahram.org' 15.10.2024: "Egypt's largest railway station, Bashteel, was inaugurated on Saturday by President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi. Located in Giza, construction of the station began in 2020, designed to serve passengers travelling to and from Upper Egypt.

Bashteel Railway Station, situated in northern Giza, is four times bigger than the historic Misr Railway Station (Ramses Station) in central Cairo. The new state-of-the-art facility is expected to ease pressure on Ramses Station which connects the nation's railways in all four directions, and reduce traffic congestion in Ramses Square, a busy area in the heart of the capital.

The station features Pharaonic architectural design, with a 40-metre-high glass pyramid and four obelisks at its entrance. It includes 12 railway platforms, tractor and carriage workshops, and a storage hub. Additionally, the station will house a garage, commercial mall, four-star hotel, and 28 towers for commercial, administrative, and residential purposes."

Bashteel Station integrates multiple modes of transportation, including the Cairo Metro's third line, the monorail, and the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. It has a daily passenger capacity of 250,000, with 28 ticket windows.

The main building consists of a basement, a garage, a ground floor, and two additional floors, with the first and second floors dedicated to shops and investment spaces. There are four platforms serving Upper Egypt passengers, six lines, including two for Aswan and Alexandria, two manoeuvring lines, and two terminating lines for trains from Upper Egypt.

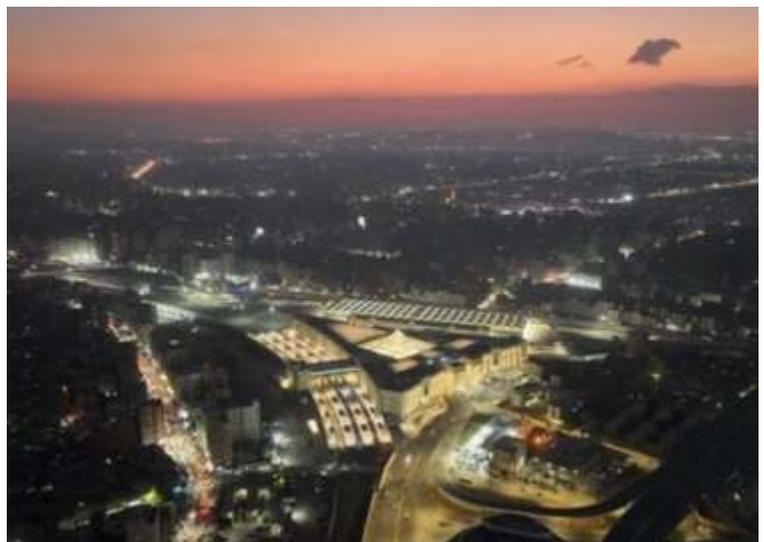
Equipped with modern facilities, the station features a smart interchange hub, passenger guidance screens, electronic ticket gates, ticket vending machines (TVM), and surveillance cameras. It is air-conditioned, offers Wi-Fi service, and is fitted with an advanced fire and alarm system.

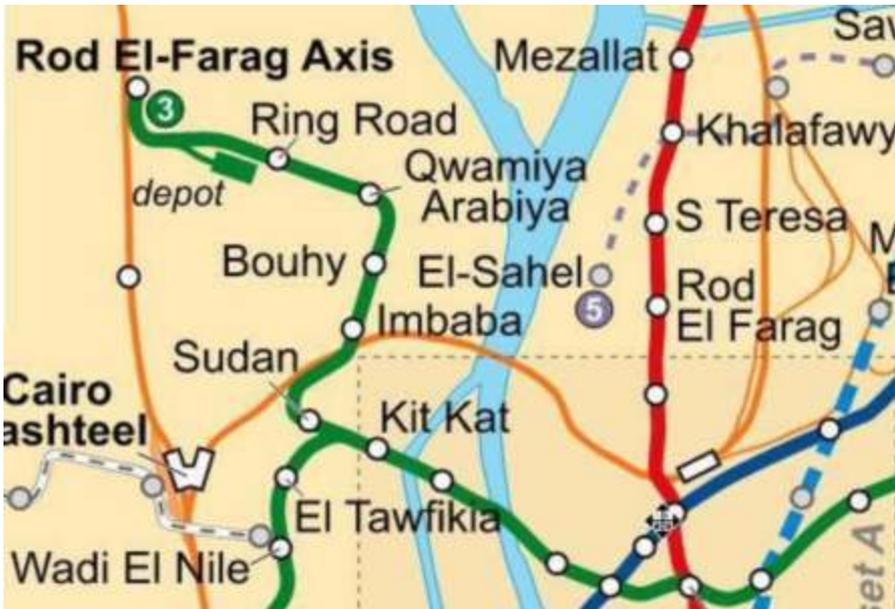
The station is a key part of the government's plan to enhance railway infrastructure and improve passenger movement between Cairo and Upper Egypt, at a cost of LE 2.5 Billion. During the opening ceremony, Al-Sisi also inaugurated, via video-conference, the Fardan - Bir Al-Abd railway line, marking the resumption of train services in Sinai after more than 50 years. A few days earlier, Minister of Industry and Transport Kamel Al-Wazir attended the launch of a trial operation of the Sinai railway line, taking the inaugural ride from Sheikh Zayed Station to Bir Al-Abd Station.

The 100-kilometre Fardan - Bir Al-Abd line has undergone extensive upgrades, including the renewal of 22 kilometres of tracks and the rehabilitation of an additional 64 kilometres. The restoration also covered 14 kilometres of rails that were stolen during the "period of insecurity" in 2011, Al-Wazir noted.

Additionally, the Ministry of Transport has renovated Bir Al-Abd Station and restored the operations of several other stations, including Qantara East, Galbana, Rummana, and Balouza.

Some LE 225 Billion has been invested over the past 10 years to improve dilapidated railways, with accidents frequently making





headlines. According to data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS), train accidents in Egypt decreased by 78 per cent in 2023, with 181 incidents recorded compared to 831 in 2022."

From 'R.G.I.' 07.11.24: "President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi inaugurated Bassteel main line station in Giza, west of Cairo, on October 12. Also referred to as the Upper Egypt hub, Bassteel has been built to relieve the congested hub at Ramses, located to the east in the city centre."

Hassan Allam Construction and Hassan Allam Roads & Bridges acted as lead contractors for the Ministry of Transportation.

Bassteel hub has been built as a new structure to a southern edge of a triangle and features platforms both on the south-to-north and the south-to-east curves, with the former north-to-east curve being closed. The homonymous station slightly north has also been closed. Bassteel is claimed to be the largest station in the country with a capacity of 250 000 passengers a day. The station features a total of 11 platforms for passenger and freight trains. The four-storey terminal covers a total area of 31 000 m2 and features a multi-storey car park and a mosque.

Adjacent the station building, rolling stock storage and repair facilities have also been built. The station is to be served by the 6th of October Monorail (also known as the West Nile Monorail) which is currently under construction."

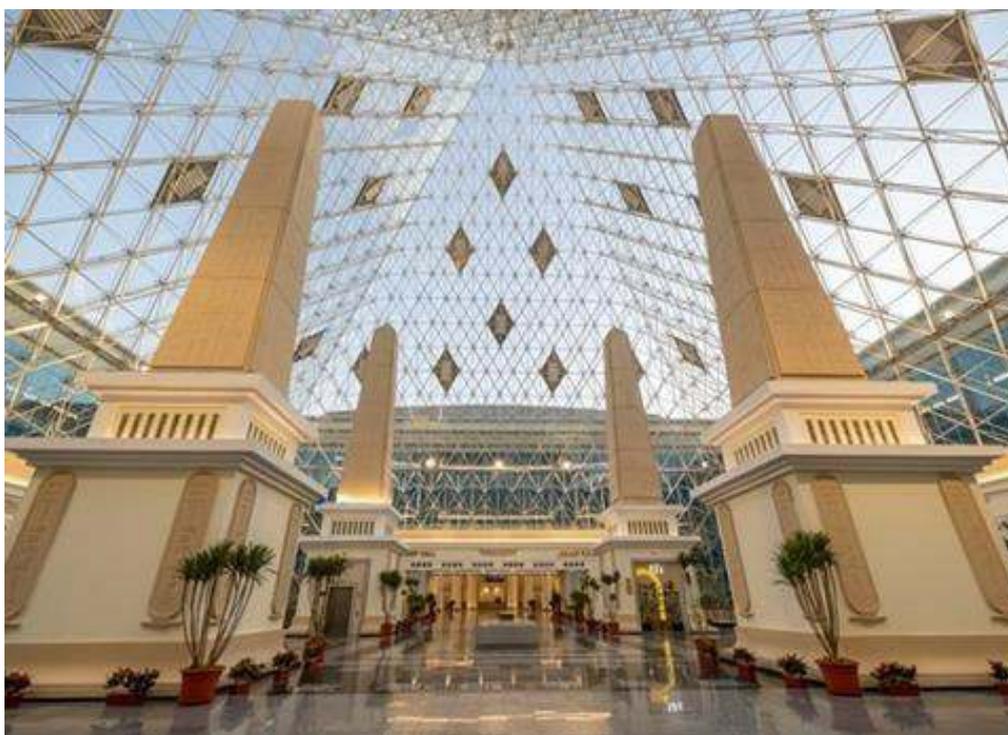
**(viii). FUNDING FOR CAIRO METRO**

From 'I.R.J.' 210.11.2024:

"Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank (ADCB) has signed a cooperation agreement with Egypt's National Authority for Tunnels (NAT) to provide a long-term credit facility of £E 4.5Bn (\$US 98.8M) through a syndicated loan.

ADCB and Arab Bank will finance the renewal of Cairo metro lines and mainline railways, as well as the city's monorail and electrified commuter projects. ADCB contributed £E 3Bn to the loan and participated as the first lead arranger, security agent, and financing agent. Arab Bank contributed £E 1.5Bn and participated as the first lead arranger for the loan.

The agreement was signed by Mr Tarek Hamed Goueili, head of NAT, and by Mr Hisham Abbas, executive board member and head of corporate and financial institutions at ADCB, and Mr Amr Azab, head of corporate and financial institutions at Arab Bank."



## F. SAUDI ARABIA

### (i). RIYADH METRO

From 'I.R.J.' 19.09.24:

"RFP issued for Riyadh Metro Line 7. The new line will be 65km long with 19 stations. The Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC) in Saudi Arabia has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to prequalified bidders for a contract to design and build Line 7 of the Riyadh Metro. The deadline for submissions is March 10 2025.

According to local media, four consortia are among those planning to bid for the project:

- Alstom has joined with FCC and Webuild, as well as local companies Freyssinet and Nesma. Design consultancy services are being provided by Tjpsa, Ayesa and Aecom.

- Siemens is reported to be working with Samsung C&T, Acciona and local company Alayuni. Idom, Dowha of Korea and Pini of Switzerland are undertaking design.

- A third consortium comprises Hitachi Rail, OHLA, Daewoo and Hyundai E&C, working with local companies Almabani and Albawani. Sener is acting as design consultant.

- CRRC is bidding with Turkish companies Mapa and Limak.

Line 7 will be 65km long with 19 stations, connecting Qiddiya Entertainment City, King Abdullah International Gardens, King Salman Park, Misk City and Diriyah Gate. The new Metro line will run in tunnel for 47km, with 19km of elevated infrastructure and 14 underground and five elevated stations.

A six-line, 176km Metro network has been constructed in Riyadh and is reportedly on the verge of opening, with an announcement expected next month."

And then on 26.11.24: "Riyadh Metro to finally open on November 27

After the project confirmed the opening on social media on November 23, Saudi officials reportedly told local media that three of the six driverless metro lines that make up the 176km, 84-station network will open this week. They are:

- the 38km, north-south Blue Line, which runs from King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Street to Dar Al-Baida Sports Ground and has 24 stations

- the 29.6km Gold Line, which connects King Khalid International Airport with the King Abdullah Financial District with nine stations, and

- the 30km Violet Line, which runs from King Abdullah Financial District to Prince Saas Ibn Abdulrahman Road, and has nine stations, three of which it shares with the Gold Line.

The opening of the remainder of the network, which has been constructed concurrently, is set to follow in mid-December or early 2025, local media reports state. This comprises the 25.3km Red Line, the 40.7km Orange Line, and the 12.9km Green Line.

Trains operate at up to 80km/h on the network, which has capacity to carry 1.16 million passengers every day. Tickets will be priced at Riyals 4 (\$US 1.07) for a two-hour ticket, that will include journeys on the 80 connecting bus lines. A three-day ticket will be available for Riyals 20 and a seven-day ticket for Riyals 40. Children under the age of six can ride free of charge. The network's operators have been encouraged to offer affordable tickets to encourage modal shift to the new metro, which is hoped will reduce road congestion in Riyadh by 20-30%.

Design and construction contracts worth a combined \$US 22.5Bn were announced for the project in 2013 with construction getting underway the following year. The project required the construction of 85km of elevated lines, 35km of tunnels using seven TBMs, and 360km of utility diversion. The network will be served by 116 two-car trains and 45 four-car trains delivered by three different suppliers.

Testing of the lines began as long ago as 2020, with a view to opening the first lines by the end of 2021. However, the opening has been consistently pushed back.

A request for proposals was issued for the 65km Metro Line 7 in September, with four consortia reportedly in the running for the project."



Alstom has supplied 69 Metropolis metro trains for the Gold, Green and Purple lines. (Photos: Alstom)

Steve Sattler sent some enthusiastic reports from Saudi sources:

"Riyadh Metro, the backbone of the Saudi capital's public transport system, officially opened to the public on Sunday. The network includes



SAR 4 (\$1) for a two-hour journey.

SAR 20 (\$5) for a three-day pass.

SAR 40 (\$11) for a one-week pass.

SAR 140 (\$37) for a 30-day pass.

Each category offers unlimited travel on both buses and the metro within the ticket's validity period."

**(ii). NEW 200km/h TRAINSETS SOUGHT**

From 'R.G.I.' 09.10.2024: "National operator Saudi Arabia Railways has invited expressions of interest in the supply of 200km/h trainsets to expand and modernise the passenger fleet on the north-south network.

six fully automated metro lines, 85 stations, and 176 km of new track, making it the world's largest self-driving public transportation project.

Designed to transport 3.6 mil passengers daily, the metro is expected to reduce Riyadh's traffic by 30%, according to the Royal Commission for Riyadh City.

The excitement among Riyadh residents was palpable on the metro's first day, with hundreds eagerly showing up to experience the inaugural ride. "My first ride was smooth. A lot of my family members, a lot of my colleagues are looking forward to taking their metro rides," said Abdullah al-Faleh, a 24-year-old Riyadh resident, speaking from the iconic King Abdullah Financial District station. The station is one of the metro's four main hubs, designed by Zaha Hadid architects. "This will ease the well-known Riyadh traffic. This is truly an amazing day," al-Faleh told Al Arabiya English.

Phased opening: The Riyadh Metro will open in 3 phases. The Blue Line, which is 38 km long, is one of the first lines to partially open, alongside the Yellow and Purple Lines, and will run north to south through Downtown Riyadh. The Red and Green Lines are set to launch by 15 Dec, while the Orange Line is scheduled to open by 5 Jan. Originally announced in 2014 with a deadline of Dec 2024, the Riyadh Metro is one of the largest transit projects ever undertaken in a single phase, earning it's "mega project" status.

"I have been waiting for this day for 10 years," said 25-year-old Mohammed al-Arifi, a Riyadh resident who took his first metro ride on Sunday. "I look forward to using the metro more as it will reduce my daily commute time," he told Al Arabiya English.

The Riyadh Metro transport network is designed to accommodate the city's rapidly growing population, projected to rise from 7.5 million in 2023 to between 15 - 20 mil by 2030. The network will feature 80 bus routes, 842 buses, and 2,860 stops, ensuring comprehensive coverage across the city.

Saad al-Dawood, a 22-year-old student in Riyadh, said the metro is highly convenient and HE plans to use it regularly for his university commute. "I have come with a few of my friends today for our first metro ride, and I have informed all of my friends and relatives to use the metro as much as possible," he told Al Arabiya English.

The "Darb" app, available in all mobile app stores, which facilitates ticket purchases for Riyadh Metro trips, announced that prices range from SAR 4 (\$1) to SAR 140 (\$37).

Tickets are available in four categories:

SAR is seeking 15 trainsets each comprising two diesel power cars and five coaches, as well eight further power cars as a reserve. The trains would be supplied with a 10-year maintenance package to ensure their long-term reliability and performance. Requirements include wi-fi connectivity, advanced passenger information systems and the ability to withstand the harsh desert conditions. The north-south services are currently operated using CAF push-pull trainsets. SAR said it needs to expand the fleet to support a projected growth in passenger numbers in this corridor; it anticipates carrying 2.5 million passengers per year by 2030 on the route.

'By expanding our fleet and upgrading our existing assets, we are not only increasing capacity but also enhancing the overall passenger experience', said Khaled Alharbi, SVP of SAR's Passenger Business Unit, on September 27.

In February SAR awarded Stadler contracts worth Sfr600M to supply and maintain 10 trainsets to operate express services to handle increasing demand on the eastern route from Riyadh to Dammam."



**(iii). VISION FOR 2035 : INNOTRANS REPORT**

Saudi Arabia Railways says its 2035 vision offers 'excellent investment opportunities'. Its updated business strategy running to 2035 includes an 8,000 km expansion of the network, becoming financially self-sustaining and partnering with leading technology suppliers, CEO Dr Bashar bin Khalid Al Malik tells Railway Gazette International. From 'R.G.I.', by Andrew Grantham. 17.10.2024: "An announcement is expected in the 'near future' which will clarify plans and the timeline for the construction of the Landbridge megaproject to provide a rail route for

maritime transit freight between the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf coasts, Al Malik told Railway Gazette Intl. at Inno Trans 2024 in September.

'The Landbridge represents about 1,400 km of the 8,000 km we are planning to develop', he said. Other projects aim to link more regions of Saudi Arabia to the rail network. 'The kingdom is huge in size, and to reach at least the main populated areas and the industrial areas requires expanding our network even further.'

International connections are also planned as part of the GCC Railway project. 'We have completed around 200+ km of our part of the network within the kingdom. There is still a segment that is to be completed all the way to Qatar and the UAE, and up north to Kuwait. Discussions are in place between the leadership of all countries to align the construction activities and to ensure that project gets completed as a whole.'

Al Malik said SAR has made good progress with rail reform. 'Two years ago our plan was to improve the efficiency of the sector as a whole', he said. There was a 'transformation' following the merger of the formerly separate Saudi Railways Organisation with SAR and 'we were able to upgrade many of the assets that were transferred to SAR as part of the legacy SRO.'

SAR has partnered with Bahri Logistics to enhance its freight forwarding capabilities, streamlining import and export processes, and has partnerships with global shipping companies including Maersk and MSC to optimise container transport between Dammam and Riyadh. Agreements with Careem and Uber aim to integrate passenger trains with other modes to provide a convenient and comprehensive experience.

The aim now is to make SAR self-sustainable, 'which is not an easy thing to do in such an industry; all national railway entities in Europe and beyond are being supported by the governments. In Saudi Arabia hopefully, this will not be the case. Soon, we will be fully dependent on our own revenues and operations. Our target to do this is 2025.' The main sources of income will be freight, but also passenger operations on the Haramain High Speed Rail line.

This will support plans for privatisation of SAR and liberalising the market. Opening the network to new operators 'would not be possible today, and this is part of the transformation we're going through', explained Al Malik, suggesting that 'privatisation can take place between 2026 and 2029 and then liberalisation would kick in'.

SAR is also looking to sell its expertise abroad. 'There are a couple of opportunities', said Al Malik. 'We have reached a level of maturity and expertise where we believe we could extend our services beyond the country. Of course, it is going to be within the region at the very beginning, not only developing new networks, but even within the operations and maintenance activities that are existing today.'

Rolling stock : 'We have a few rolling stock RFPs that have been either floated or about to be floated in the market as well', said Al Malik. 'Earlier this year, we signed a contract with Stadler, who will be supplying trains for the first time to SAR. We are working very closely with them to ensure that the design is fit for purpose; production should start soon, to have those trains delivered starting from the beginning of Q4 2027. We are very excited, and we are in discussion to even increase the number of trainsets.'

At the previous InnoTrans SAR and Alstom had agreed to test a hydrogen multiple-unit in Riyadh to assess the suitability of the technology for the Saudi environment. The trials were intended to support the Saudi Vision 2030 goals for reducing carbon emissions and promoting clean energy.

Testing the train in Riyadh proved "a very successful experiment" said Al Malik. "We were able to identify some of the challenges that need to be taken care of by the supplier and by ourselves as an operator. Nothing major, but things that will guarantee the success of such technology.

Hydrogen trains themselves are still evolving. They have not reached their ultimate targets yet, be it the distance that they can travel or the

maximum speed they can reach. So we're following closely. We're not limiting ourselves, of course, to Alstom. We're in contact with other suppliers for such technology, and we might be bringing other trains to the kingdom to confirm the suitability and the possibility of running those trains in the capital."

Al Malik is also 'very proud' of the project with Italian high-end hospitality company Arsenale to launch a Dream of the Desert five-star luxury cruise from Riyadh to Al Qurayyat on the border with Jordan in late 2025.

'It's a unique project', he said. Arsenale will be 'taking care of the experience as a whole, including the rolling stock to be provided by them, and we're working closely with them on the design, the journey, identifying the destinations. I think it's going to be an excellent experience for locals and visitors. It will give them the opportunity to observe the beauty of Saudi Arabia over a very luxurious transport mode. I'm sure the demand will be extremely high.'

'Excellent investment opportunities'

Having exhibited at InnoTrans for the first time in 2022, this year SAR was back with a much larger presence. 'You have to be at InnoTrans – if you work in the industry, then InnoTrans definitely cannot be missed', explained Al Malik. 'It's an opportunity to network with the industry's key players and also showcase what we're doing today, what we're focusing on, and how we can collaborate with different entities to achieve our joint targets with the players in the industry.'

SAR is eager to collaborate with leading technology providers in sectors including signalling, telecommunications and digitalisation, seeking 'cutting-edge' ways to enhance the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of the Saudi rail network. It is also committed to developing local talent through partnerships with international institutions to facilitate knowledge transfer and training.

Al Malik said 'technology plays an important role for all in our industry. So we're always looking into the latest aspects of our business, be it asset management, data utilisation, interfaces and integration with other operators in the country and the region as well. Also it's an opportunity to present our plans and to invite the suppliers, consultants and contractors to participate in our future plans.'

He said 'when it comes to technology, we want to co-operate with the latest developers to find solutions that fit our plans that can really assist in improving our efficiencies, increasing our revenues and improving the customer's experience.' His message to potential suppliers is 'I would like to invite them to Saudi Arabia. The country is going through a major transformation. And there are excellent investment opportunities, in the rail sector and beyond. I think there are very attractive incentives that the government has put in place, including to establish regional headquarters in the kingdom.'

SAR's presence at InnoTrans aimed 'to ensure this message and the details are clear to the industry, and to encourage them to visit, to explore themselves. I'm sure it will open very attractive opportunities.'

Agreements signed by SAR at InnoTrans 2024

- Shadow Operator agreement with Deutsche Bahn covering the Haramain High Speed Railway;
- SAR became the 16th member of the EULYNX signalling standardisation consortium of infrastructure managers, and the first outside Europe, and gaining access to expert knowledge and participating in technical discussions to shape industry standards and develop signalling standards tailored to SAR's specific needs while ensuring alignment with global protocols;
- MoU with Indra Sistemas covering the creation of joint R&D facilities and a Centre of Excellence to drive innovation in the rail sector;

- MoU with Italian infrastructure group Salcef covering trackwork and R&D to address challenges posed by Saudi Arabia's high temperatures and sandy environment;

- SAR and Hitachi Rail discussed the integration of cutting-edge technologies into Saudi Arabia's rail infrastructure and opportunities for localisation;

- 'Productive' talks on Voith's potential involvement in future rail projects, including drive systems, braking and digital technology;

- Discussion with Stadler covered further potential passenger train projects and opportunities for localising manufacturing;

- Accenture discussed enhancing capabilities in security, logistics, robotics, digitised cabs and advanced traffic management systems;

- SAR entered into a dialogue with Vossloh regarding hydrogen locomotive technology;

- SAR and Progress Rail discussed areas for collaboration and leveraging local capabilities, while discussions with Wabtec covered the supply of critical components and with Talgo the enhancement of the passenger experience."

transportation network that not only enhances connectivity in KAFD but also sets a new benchmark for urban innovation and mobility in Saudi Arabia and beyond.'

A previous KAFD monorail project was cancelled in 2016, two years after Bombardier Transportation unveiled the first vehicle at Inno Trans 2014. Planning was relaunched in 2022, with Systra appointed to provide technical and supervision services."

## G. LEBANON

### (i). TUNNEL VISION

In view of subsequent events in September and October 2024 this item from 'Times of Israel' of 19 July 2022 is of historic interest:

"Hezbollah demands return of border rail tunnel in likely bid to torpedo Israel talks.

Minister aligned with terror group says passage, closed since Israel's creation in 1948, is Lebanon's sovereign territory; remark seen as trying to complicate maritime negotiations

A Lebanese minister affiliated with the Hezbollah terror group demanded Monday that Israel give Lebanon control over a long-shuttered rail tunnel that goes from Israel's northern border town of Rosh Hanikra and stretches hundreds of metres into Lebanon.

"Our sovereign rights lie in our decision to restore every inch of the occupied tunnel, without compromising our decision to restore our land and sea borders as well," Hamieh said during a visit to the Lebanese side of the border, Israel's Channel 12 news reported.

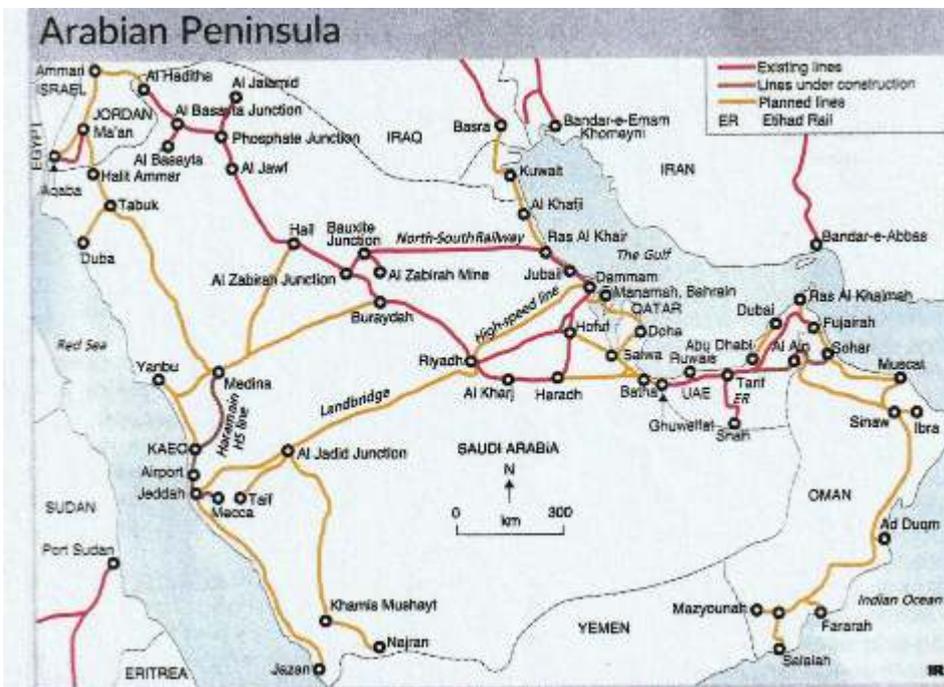
Dug in 1941 by the British rulers, the 695-metres-long tunnel was part of a rail system that once linked Egypt to Turkey, passing through British Mandate Palestine and Lebanon. It has been closed since Israel's War of Independence in 1948. In 2000, when Israel pulled out of southern Lebanon, it filled the Lebanese exit with concrete while the tunnel remained under Israeli control as a closed military zone. Hamieh also demanded that the concrete barrier be pulled down.

Israeli sources were cited by Channel 12 as saying that relinquishing control of the tunnel would present a threat to Kibbutz Rosh Hanikra, which lies along the border.

Though Lebanese authorities have not made any demands about the tunnel for many years, the subject was previously raised by the Lebanese negotiating team in the maritime talks, according to the report. The report said Hezbollah views the tunnel as a way of gaining leverage in the negotiations. However, political opponents to Hezbollah in Beirut are claiming the demand is just a distraction intended to complicate the maritime talks.

Moshe Davidovich, head of the Mateh Asher Regional Council, said in a statement that the "delusory demand by the Lebanese government is at best a failed joke and at worst a foolish attempt to undermine the facts about the State of Israel."

Hezbollah has recently escalated its rhetoric and actions over the border dispute, after Israel moved a natural gas drilling vessel into its Karish field, which Lebanon claims is a disputed area. Lebanon protested the development and Hezbollah made threats to attack the field. In its boldest move, Hezbollah sent three drones toward the Karish platform on July 2, all of which were intercepted by the IDF. Last week, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah threatened Israel with war, saying that drones sent recently to the Karish gas field were "only the beginning."



### (iv). RIYADH MONORAIL SCHEME

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 31.10.2024: "Contracts have been awarded for the construction of a monorail within Riyadh's King Abdullah Financial District mixed-use development. This is intended to reduce the need for private vehicles as part of the vision for a walkable '10 min city'. The 3-6 km elevated circular line will have six stations serving office, retail and leisure facilities in the 'city within a city', and easy connections to the Riyadh Metro. It will be operated using six automated trainsets, and is expected to handle up to 3 500 passengers/h at peak times.

King Abdullah Financial District Development & Management Co has signed the contracts with a consortium of CRRC (Hong Kong) Co, CRRC Nanjing Puzhen and Hassan Allam Construction.

'With this project, we are not only enhancing the quality of life for KAFD's residents and visitors but also contributing to the long-term sustainability of Riyadh', said Stephen Thomas, Chief Operations Officer of KAFD DMC, on October 30. 'The monorail is a symbol of progress, seamlessly connecting the district while supporting Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.' CRRC said the project 'is set to deliver an advanced

“Write down this equation – we will reach Karish and everything beyond Karish and everything beyond that... If you want to prevent Lebanon from exercising its right to save itself by extracting oil and gas, no one will be able to extract oil and gas,” he said in a televised speech marking 16 years since the Second Lebanon War....

Nasrallah’s speech last Wednesday coincided with US President Joe Biden’s first visit to the region as president. Hochstein, the US negotiator, joined Biden on the Israel and Saudi Arabia legs of the trip...” And so it goes on.....

**(ii). TUNNEL VISION 2**

It was also reported that in 2019 a Hizbollah tunnel was located "which included a railway line for moving munitions and garbage." (And see rear cover).

**H. ETHIOPIA**

From 'I.R.I.' 10.10.2024: "A report published by Ethiopia’s Ministry of Transport and Logistics on the prospects for reforming the country’s surface transport systems says that investment totalling \$US 500M will be needed to build rail capacity.

The document provides an overview of the resources needed to widen the range of ports in other countries that are accessible from landlocked Ethiopia, and for other projects such as upgrading the 752km Ethiopia-Djibouti railway that connects the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa with the port of Djibouti.

According to the report, operational, legislative and institutional reform are required to improve rail infrastructure, with investment needs being particularly high for operational reform. Funding will also be needed to introduce a standardised rail safety regime. Rail projects including new port connections will require \$US 300M, according to the report, while equipping existing rolling stock maintenance facilities and ensuring a sustainable supply of spare parts will cost \$US 200M.

“Financing for railway projects is now more readily available,” the report says.



• Rosh Hanikra pictured above in 1960s and below in 2012



The Ministry of Transport and Logistics has conducted in-house feasibility studies for the construction of two new lines, Dire Dawa - Harar - Jigjiga - Togochale - Berbera and Aysha - Berbera. The government is intending to call tenders for further joint feasibility studies.

Also under consideration is a new line from Modjo and Moyale to the port of Lamu in Kenya. A study has been completed for building the Woldiya - Wereta - Metemma - Gadarif - Port Sudan line, connecting Ethiopia with the Red Sea port in Sudan, while another is underway for a line connecting Sebeta and Jimma with Boma in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Among projects to build rail connections to inland freight terminals in Ethiopia, immediate priority is being given to Kombolcha, Mekelle, and Wereta."

**I. AFGHANISTAN:**

From 'R.G.I.' 09.10-2024: "Work has been launched to enhance the Towraghondi freight terminal on the border with Turkmenistan and extend the 1,520mm gauge rail link to Sanobar in Herat province.

A ceremony was held on September 11 to launch work on the US\$40M enhancement project after an Afghan delegation signed bilateral agreements with Turkmenistan, which will lead the projects. The first phase includes the construction of new warehouses, sidings, and loading and unloading facilities at the Towraghondi terminal, which was built by Soviet personnel across the border from the southernmost point of the USSR."

*See photo next page.*



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

147:08

### (i). HERZL'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM

From Steve Sattler on the history of the Kaminitz Hotel:

"Although it was the first of its kind, this modest establishment wouldn't have entered the annals of history had it remained as it first was. It was Menachem Mendel's son, Eliezer Lipman Kaminitz, who took the family business to the next level. First, he moved the hotel to Jaffa Street (it was located in the previous life on what is now Jerusalem's well known Clal Center), but he wasn't satisfied with that location. In 1883, he rented a building situated between Ha-Nevi'im (The Prophets) & Jaffa Streets from the Volhynia Kolel and officially opened the new, modern "Hotel Jerusalem". Despite Eliezer's attempts at rebranding, the abode quickly became known to all as the latest form of the, by now familiar, "Kaminitz Hotel".

This was no longer a modest inn offering only clean beds or a decent breakfast. A garden was planted in the courtyard & a wide path was paved for carriages. The hotel rooms were equipped with all the comforts of the era: chamber pots, mosquito nets, and bathing basins awaited travelers who often arrived dusty & tired. The hotel lobby offered a daily page with the latest international headlines from the Reuters News Agency. In the center of the room stood the pinnacle of modern technology in the form of an elegant telephone device. The telephone number was 53.

Modernization took over all aspects of the hotel's management, including its marketing. Advertising posters were designed and sent to many newspapers in Europe, and the Kaminitz family signed deals with travel agents who met tourists arriving at the 1892 Jerusalem train station & offered them tour packages that included the finest accommodations to be found in the area- the Kaminitz Hotel.

Business was booming and the guests, for the most part, were very pleased with the service, the cleanliness and the excellent food, which also had a good reputation among local Jerusalemites as well. For

example, as the British consul's wife Elizabeth Finn wrote, European bread could only be obtained at Kaminitz. Although the meals at the hotel were strictly kosher and one of the spacious rooms was designated as a synagogue and Beit Midrash, guests came from all over the world and from a wide range of religions and nations. It was soon known as an international institution. In the hotel guest book, you can find the compliments showered upon the establishment by the main guests - (mostly male, since the custom of the time mandated that when couples and families arrived at the hotel, it was the man who was given the privilege of inscribing his impressions). The guest book entries were written in Yiddish, 19th-century Hebrew, Arabic, English, French, German and many other languages.

"There is only one dubious 'guest event' at the famous Kaminitz hotel that history is aware of, and it involved Theodor Herzl. Herzl arrived in Jerusalem to meet with the last German Emperor, Wilhelm II, who was then visiting the Holy Land. Autumn 1898. Given everything described above, the Kaminitz Hotel was Herzl's preferred choice of accommodation. He booked rooms in advance - for himself and for the several companions who joined him. In those days writing a letter was the only real option. Mail from Europe to Jerusalem would take 5 -15 days.

However the Emperor's visit was an Olympic-scale event for Jerusalem, which, despite its historical significance, was still a relatively small city. The demand placed on tourism and transportation services was immense and Herzl, who had fallen slightly ill with a fever during the trip, ran into complications. The famous J&J train that was supposed to arrive on Friday afternoon in Jerusalem was either delayed or at full capacity and the Zionist visionary had to wait for a later train that was not on the original schedule but was added due to the overload. The history on this is somewhat contradictory, but one thing is clear - the train with the ailing and miserable Herzl only arrived at the Jerusalem station in the evening, after the Jewish Sabbath had already begun. The hotel carriage that was supposed to be waiting for him at the station was no longer there, and Herzl adamantly refused to use any other

carriage so as not to offend the Sabbath-observant Jews in the city. Lacking any other option, his small group set out on foot, at the slow pace of someone feeling unwell and unused to the Middle-Eastern weather and rough roads. The distance was just over 2 kms, and the route was both up and down.

The travellers weren't too bothered. They were sure they would soon arrive at the hotel & enjoy a good meal, a bath and a warm bed, where Herzl could recover for his meeting with the German Emperor. But an unpleasant surprise awaited them. Once the Sabbath had begun, the hotel staff assumed that Herzl wouldn't be arriving that day. There was a long waiting list full of German nobles and military men who had accompanied the Emperor, so the staff figured there was no need to leave the rooms empty. When Herzl arrived, someone else was sleeping in his bed.

History says 'that there is general consensus about the story so far', but from this point on, it differs depending on the teller. It was late at night & Herzl had no place else to go, so he had no choice but to stay within the confines of the hotel. What happened next seems to be a matter of opinion. According to the most uneventful version of the story, he was given a tiny, uncomfortable room to share with one of his companions. Other versions claim that he had to make do with an old bed that was dragged out of storage and placed in a corridor without any privacy, or that Herzl simply slept on a pool table in the lounge since there were no beds available. Either way, the members of Herzl's small entourage were less than impressed with the hotel after this miserable experience. The next morning, they left and spent the remainder of their time in the country at "Stem House" near the Mamilla neighbourhood.

This unpleasant incident didn't affect the Kaminitz business, who by then had become successful hoteliers, opening establishments in other cities including Hebron, Jaffa, Jericho and Petach Tikva...."

## (ii). GETTING TO EGYPT

In the Newsletter of the 'Amis de Wagons-Lits' 'No. 23 Sept. 2024' we find pp.19ff. by Jean-Marc Dupuy:

"After noting the correspondence of cross-Channel ships coming from Dover, its departure from Calais was scheduled for Mondays for an arrival in Rome on Tuesdays; the return journey took place on Saturdays from the eternal city for an arrival on Sundays in Calais.

In the winter of 1897-1898, from November 15, its hours were as follows:

London 09.00; dep. Calais 00.49; Paris Nord arr. 16.35, dep. 16.50, Modane arr. 04.51, dep. 05.55 (this was only a brief stop but the train entered the Central European time zone!) Turin 08.58, Genoa 12.21, Rome 22.35.

On the return route between Paris-Nord and Amiens the "Calais-Rome-Express" achieved an average commercial speed of 92 km/h, which then made it the fastest train in Europe. Between Calais and Macon, the train also conveyed a sleeping car to Ventimiglia which was then attached to a special connection using the timetables of the "Mediterranean-Express". In order not to slow down the progress of the train when crossing the border between France and Italy, the hand luggage accompanying the travellers was inspected in the compartments along the way.

During the winter of 1898-1899 travellers continuing south of Rome benefitted from an immediate connection to Naples. A liner from the Compagnie Générale de Navigation was also waiting for them to take them to the Egyptian port of Alexandria. People who left London on Thursdays at 09:00 could thus arrive in Egypt on the following Tuesdays from 06:00, the journey including the two crossings of the Channel and the Mediterranean taking 117 hours. An identical organization took place in Naples upon return from Alexandria (departures on Fridays).

As the train's loading was very satisfactory, the CIWL ran it on two days a week from January 31, 1899. Taking the name "Calais-Paris-Rome-

Express" in the timetables, it left every Tuesday and Thursday for Italy, while its returns were scheduled to Paris and Calais on Wednesdays and Fridays. The train leaving Paris on Thursdays and returning on Saturdays also offered a direct sleeping car to Naples; thus ensuring better maritime connections to Alexandria (London - Alexandria in 117 hours), this carriage was connected at Rome into a train coming from Germany and Austria."

"For the new timetables for the winter of 1919-1920, after the decisions taken during the first European Timetable Conference (CEH) held after the war, the French and Italian networks gave their approval for the reactivation priority of this luxury train between the two cities. The train, finding its place in the very exclusive club of large luxury trains, changed its name now to "Rome-Express". Made up of sleeping cars, a dining car and two vans, it then circulated three times a week. Its departures were offered from Paris-Lyon station on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays in times Paris 14:00 - Rome 22:10 (Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays) and returns positioned on the same days from Rome in a path 22.00 to Paris reached the next day at 14:35.

If the destinations of Palermo and Taormina were withdrawn following the shortening of its route to Rome, a test connection to Istanbul had nevertheless been attempted. In fact, every week, a sleeping car for Taranto was attached to it. From this port, a connecting liner was immediately leaving for Corinth and Turkey. This possibility was then removed when the "Simplon-Orient-Express" was extended beyond Belgrade."

## (iii). HOW THE KRIEGSLOKS CAME TO TURKEY

In 'Eisenbahn Klassik' Autumn 2024 p.38ff is an article by Robin Garn concerning his adventures riding (and firing) former German Class 52 'Kriegsloks' along some of the wild and mountainous main lines in Turkey in the early 1980's. He begins with some useful history.

"The young Turkish republic, influenced by Kemal intensified in the 1930's its railway construction activity and also modernised the fleet of the state railway Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Demiryollari (TCDD) founded in 1927. Amongst the 167 steam locos ordered in the years 1930-1940 there were only two types not built in Germany. Henschel delivered 54 engines, Krupp 49, BMAG 8 and Esslingen 7, initially examples of Prussian construction and then designs derived from the Reichsbahn standard types. Nohab (Nydqvist & Holm, Trollhättan, Sweden) delivered 37 "lengthened Prussian G8.2" built under licence.

The medium-heavy 2-cyl. 2-10-0's of 18t axleload were built first in 1937 by Henschel but as the German industry switched to the increasing preparations for war it could not cope with all the Turkish orders and so an Anglo-Turkish Agreement of 1939 envisaged further identical examples of the TCDD Class 56.0 to be built under licence by Beyer, Peacock & Co. of Manchester and Vulcan Foundry Ltd. of Newton-le-Willows. The war prevented this becoming reality. In 1940/41 German officials also diverted 25 locos intended for Turkey partly for internal German purposes (as Class 58.28) or half-way to Anatolia delivered them instead to the Bulgarian State Railways. In Britain any idea of building locos to German standard design and to metric measurements, with Wagner smoke deflectors and German standard cabs and long-tube boilers, was now left until after the war. Instead the British resorted to a more immediate form of solution. On the recommendation of the British ambassador and the Foreign Ministry to send some locos to Turkey, the War Ministry in 1941 had 25 examples of the Stanier '8F' 2-8-0 of LMS design adapted in Glasgow and since the route through the Mediterranean seemed too dangerous had them shipped via the Cape of Good Hope to be landed at Port Said in Egypt. From here they were to take the land route to Sivas and be assembled in the large locomotive workshops there under the supervision of the LMS engineer R. G. Jarvis. Seven engines did not reach their destination. Four on board the 'Jessmore' were victim to a collision in a convoy in the Atlantic on 19 February 1941. Three more were in the hold of the freighter 'Berhala' which was torpedoed on 23 May 1941 off Freetown, Sierra Leone by U38 (Captain-Lieut. Heinrich Liebe).

The Turkish state leadership maintained a cool head on the hot and slippery diplomatic dance floor of a Europe under Nazi German influence; they were able to maintain neutrality, were courted from all sides and were able to profit from this.

The head of the German Embassy in Ankara was Franz von Papen, a rather controversial figure in history. In the First World War he had led a Turco-German cavalry army to Jerusalem and remained afterwards in friendly contact with many former comrades who later became senior figures in the government, such as the Foreign Minister Numan Menemcioglu, Prime Minister Sükrü Saracoglu and State President General Ismet İnönü. His failed attempt and foolish belief in the second half of 1932 that he could somehow 'restrict' Hitler's power through parliamentary means brought him the reputation till the end of his life of having been in effect merely the coat-hanger holder for the Führer. In 1943/44 Papen's Deputy in Ankara, the Envoy Jenke had formerly been the Krupp representative in Turkey. 'Assistant to the Military Attaché' was Reinhard Henschel of the locomotive-building dynasty.

In 1943/44 a spy using the code name 'Cicero' delivered to the Germans numerous photographs of secret documents – for money. He was ElYESER Bazna, a Kosovo-Albanian domestic servant of the British ambassador to Turkey Sir Hugh Montgomery. A cabled report may have moved the German Reich, which was seeking sympathetic allies, to send in Spring 1943 ten brand-new Henschel locos (they became TCDD 56510-510) and then extract a further 43 locos of the Class 52 from six different lots in February/March 1944 and despatch them to Turkey. Officially declared as a loan, they had a bureaucratic encounter in Bulgaria which called for intervention by the DR-General Representative there. It may seem remarkable now that of the approximately 6,350 locos fabricated during the war only these 53 were meant for Turkey, outside the military operating area of the Wehrmacht. What did Germany get in return? Turkish chrome oxide (for preparation of special steels and high-temperature linings), this being a basic need of the German wartime industry.

Once Turkey – very late and really only 'pro forma' – declared war on Germany in February 1945 the locos still running in Turkey with their DR numbers were now absorbed into the motive power fleet as TCDD 56511.553.

Original documents reproduced include a letter of 2. August 1943 from the 'Deutsche Reichsbahn Verkehrsagentur für Bulgarien' at Ul. 6. Septemvri 17, Sofia.

"Subject: German Loan Locomotives for Turkey. With reference to our discussion today I am honoured to inform you that the following locomotives rented by the Deutsche Reichsbahn to the Turkish State Railways, namely Nos. 52 364, 365, 367, 368 and 52 6063 were halted by the Bulgarian Customs authorities at Bela Palanka on Friday 30th. July 1943 as they had no Customs documentation accompanying them, The machines are currently stored in Sofia.

I request most humbly that, on the basis of my conversation today with Herr Director Usunoff, the Royal Bulgarian Finance Ministry direct itself by telegraph to the Customs Office in Svilengrad to enable the locomotives to depart from the Bulgarian Customs Zone also without any papers. At the same time I request that the machines can be forwarded to Svilengrad without further delay. Be assured of my deepest gratitude for your caring efforts...."

Later on, however, problems showed themselves. A letter of 25 November 1943 from the 'Deutsche Reichsbahn : Der Generalvertreter für Bulgarien' (note different title but same address) to the Eisenbahnabteilung of the Reichsverkehrsministerium in Berlin lists some of the grievances.

"Of the German loan locomotives of Class 52 which have been running in Turkey since August 1941, already one driving rod and several coupling rods have fractured. According to the Turkish State Railways the fractures are due to inadequate standard of welding during manufacture." On 10 Sept. 1943 52 366 broke a right-side driving rod; in early October 52 4856 suffered coupling rods fractured on both right and left sides. Then at the end of October 52 366 (again) suffered

fractures, this time of right and left coupling rods between the second and third axle. "I assume that all these incidents occurred during the Guarantee period. I have brought from Ankara the two ends of the fracture of the rod from 52 366 and will bring them with me on my next visit to Berlin. I have asked the TCDD to retain the broken sections in case evidence of incorrect welding techniques might be necessary. Copied to Reichsbahn-Zentralamt Berlin and the RBD Wien.

For the rest the Turkish railways are satisfied with the loaned locomotives." Signed by a Herr Rebus.

In many respects these locos were similar to the 'standard' Class 52; this included:

- No Smoke Deflectors added.
- Frost Protection (incl. the protective casing for the two-stage air pump), oil pipes along the boiler side, steam collection point in cab.
- Only one Water Glass and only one testing valve.
- No Speedometer or Pyrometer.
- Two Steam Pumps (180l. Capacity) to feed the boiler.
- A Lever, not handwheel, used for the valve for the steam supply to the pumps.
- Full disc wheels on the pony truck.
- No equipment on the tender to wet the coal.
- On some of the Floridsdorf-built fixed-frame tenders there were the hooks on the side for the later hanging of insulation or splinter-protective mats.

However the following Alterations were also made:

- German standard Smokebox Door with central closure handle.
- A second Spark Arrestor on the chimney.
- a Searchlight as third (and at night vital) headlamp. (although strangely this was missing from locos stationed in the Eastern Turkey).
- Screwed Cylinder Cap with safety valve (standard type.)
- Through Snowplough (also useful for collisions with larger animals ) instead of the smaller snow shovels.
- A Turbogenerator fitted on the right side of the smokebox.
- Loco Whistle without a resonance-casing (positioned as usual in front of the cab but giving a very shrill tone).
- Lengthened supply casing on all 38 'Wannen' and 15 Steifrahmen' tenders. Allowing 2t more coal capacity.
- Oil firing (for probably 11 machines, all with Wannentender, that were to work in the Eastern Anatolia close to the oil sources.)

These alterations, together with the Oriental love for decoration, gave the "Turkish 52's" their specific exterior image. A copy of a 'Handover Protocol' dated 28.10.43 for 52.7292 of RBD Wien undertaken at Haydarpasa shows that a visual inspection was made of firebox, boiler, boiler instruments, smoke box, frame, running gear and wheels, cylinders and rods and 'other items' and all was marked as "Good as far as can be seen". The tender likewise. Next overhaul was due 28.10 1946. There was no coal and no lubrication materials on board and the rental agreement was valid as from the day the loco crossed the border at Svilengrad 15.12.1943.

The 53 locos were used all over the system where a 15T axle load was permitted. In the 1980's they were mainly concentrated on routes

with low axle-loading in Western Anatolia, working from depots at Balikesit, Izmir, Usak, Afyon, Burdur and Erzurum.

#### (iv). BOOK REVIEW - HEDJAZ RAILWAY

This is taken from the 'Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly' Vol 156 No. 3 p.290f.: "Desert Insurgency: Archaeology, T. E. Lawrence and the Arab Revolt" by N. J. Saunders. O.U.P. Oxford 2000. 400pp. ISBN 978-0-19872-200-7.

"Nearly every aspect of the life of T. E. Lawrence has been written about in great detail. ... What is rare is for new research to provide extensive material that contextualises the moments which Lawrence wrote about in 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom'... Nicholas J. Saunders accomplishes this in spades in 'Desert Insurgency'. The volume covers the world of the Great Arab Revolt Project (GARP) beginning with their fieldwork which started in 2006 and finished in 2014. ... The Arab Revolt stretched across a vast territory and the study area of GARP was focussed on a section of the Hejaz Railway in southern Jordan. Saunders provides the right level of detail on the historical background in the first third of the book so that a non-specialist reader can become familiar with the subject material. Other figures, both Western and non-Western, are given adequate attention which gives readers the impression of the diversity of individuals involved in both sides of the campaign.

The main thrust is in Chapters 6-9 which include both historic and contemporary photographs (all exquisite) and scaled plans. The success of this publication is that it situates (both historically and archaeologically) the landscape of the Arab Revolt within southern Jordan. Legible maps are provided which show the movement of troops (including British, Ottoman and Bedouin guerillas) within the sites that the project team had identified. These are then contrasted with plans showing the distribution of armaments and find spot locations identified during the survey. This adds a coherency to the guerilla warfare which characterised the Arab revolt, an aspect which can often be lost in other publications on the same topic.

The last third of the book forms the supplemental material including a detailed Gazetteer, which compiles all of the sites (blockhouses, camps, forts, cemeteries, wells) that were discovered during the GARP. Importantly, these were all added to the database of Endangered Archaeology of the Middle East and North Africa (EAMENA) which is publicly accessible. This collected data and the fact that it is open access is of enormous benefit to those interested in researching this period.

What is compelling about this publication (and the work of GARP) is that it blows the doors off a strictly western focussed approach to the subject matter. It dignifies the efforts of all those involved in the conflict on both sides of the Arab Revolt during the First World War. Local expertise, support and voices are the key to the success of the project and make this volume stand uniquely apart from others. This interdisciplinary aspect of the project helps make the point that the Arab Revolt took place in a changing and living landscape that continues to be used by the Bedouin (which Saunders makes a point of showing) and which is still affected by the results of the past.

This volume personalises the Arab Revolt by showing readers, largely for the first time, what the locations as described in 'Seven Pillars' looked like. The archaeological remains help the reader to get an impression of what it must have felt like to be there. .... Saunders has delivered a truly unique publication on a subject that has been extensively covered. It adds a new and welcome perspective which can hopefully inspire similar approaches....."

#### (v). BABYLON STATION

From 'R.T.& S' 23.09.24. "NEW YORK CITY - The MTA announced an accessibility upgrade and station renovation project at LIRR's Babylon station. .... Located as a major connection point for eastern Long Island and Montauk, Babylon Station is the terminal station on the Babylon Branch....."

#### (vi). COUPLING AND UNCOUPLING AT SPEED

From "Israel 21c" online; By John Jeffay September 22, Updated September 25

"Trains are safe, reliable, cost-effective and energy-efficient. They're a great mode of transport in almost every way, except for one thing. The gaps between them.

You need a big, long gap between trains to be safe. You can't slam on the brakes and expect hundreds of tons of rolling stock to come to a shuddering halt. You must have at least 1.5km (nearly a mile) between train A and train B, which means you're limited to around 14 trains an hour on any given stretch of line.

And so, the rail network capacity is fixed. Or at least it was until two Israel Air Force veterans devised a way that effectively doubles it.

Alberto Mandler and Moti Topf, CEO and CTO of DirecTrainSystems, respectively, applied what they knew about the mid-flight refuelling of airplanes in the sky to trains on the ground. Together they came up with what they call "dynamic coupling" (not be confused with the Paltrow-Pitt notion of conscious uncoupling): It means separate railway cars can attach (and also detach) while moving at any speed.

A passenger service to one destination can be coupled for part of its journey with a freight service to another, counting as one train and freeing up more capacity for additional trains.

Rail operators have always been able to couple trains together while they're stationary. The game-changing element here is the ability to do so without the trains stopping or even slowing.

#### Saving time and energy

Picture two branch lines converging into one. Each branch line can accommodate a maximum of 14 trains an hour. The joint line also has a certain capacity. But it can't manage 14 plus 14 from both branch lines. It would be overcrowded and unsafe. Dynamic coupling enables the 14 trains on each branch line to pair up - now seven on each line instead of 14.

Dynamic coupling also offers huge savings in terms of both time and energy. One train uses as much electricity pulling out of the station as an average household uses in a year.

That's why the patented system that Mandler and Topf have developed is set to revolutionize train travel. Piggybacking services squeezes the maximum from expensive rail infrastructures that have never achieved their full potential in the two centuries since George Stephenson gave the world his locomotive engine. Train services could become far more frequent (and far quicker) because the network capacity would effectively be doubled.

Mandler says the technology could slash journey times between Haifa and Tel Aviv from 55 minutes to just 35 minutes.

#### Secret formula

So how do Mandler and Topf actually get the trains to hook up and unhook at speed?

"It's our secret exactly how we do it," says Mandler. "But instead of trying to control the trains we do it in a different way and have an assisted mechanism that helps the connection of the trains." He's not giving much away.

"We are experts in installing new systems in aircraft. We were responsible for refuelling planes in the air force and we are taking technologies from aircraft to trains. The mechanism has some similarities.

Planes fly at 700 kilometres per hour, he explains, with 6 degrees of freedom (that's a measure of their ability to move and rotate freely in three-dimensional space). Trains travel at 40km with 1 degree of freedom,

which sounds, to a non-engineer, like a more attractive prospect – lower speed, less flapping around.

Nonetheless, the idea of positioning the front of train A to reach – but not hit – the back of train B, is still somewhat mindboggling. All the more so when DirecTrains' tech for 40km/h hookups will eventually be good for 120km/h hookups.

What they've developed is similar, in some respects, to the Instrument Landing System (ILS) that pilots use on their approach the runway. ILS provides short-range horizontal and vertical guidance, even in low visibility, via radio signals.

#### To be tested in 2025

The DirecTrains technology has been shown to work in simulations, but has yet to be tried out using actual trains on an actual track. The hardware for that is currently being manufactured and the system is due to be tried out on a test track in France early next year.

The team, based in Zichron Ya'akov, northern Israel, will then need to work on integrating the technology. The hardware will be installed into existing trains, Mandler says.

"It will take another year until we will be able to test it on a real line including all the infrastructure and the signalling," he tells ISRAEL21c.

The first trains to be fitted with the technology will be freight rather than passenger trains, specifically those carrying parcels for e-commerce. "That's our first product target market. It's called the middle mile, delivering to a main hub outside the city. At the moment it's only done by trucks, because trains entering the city have reached 100 percent capacity."

With the DirecTrains technology, one small train for parcels could keep up to 15 trucks off the roads. "Train companies are very, very conservative, so we believe it will take a little bit longer before they use it for passengers. They'll want to see it working first," says Mandler.

"We've invested our own money in the startup. Now we're waiting for the full test environment for the railway companies to believe us. Until now they think that it's science fiction."

A link leads to the following:

#### "The Challenge"

Rail system is worldwide agreed to be the greenest and the best means of land transportation for medium ranges for both passengers and freight.

However, while global transport is expected to triple by 2050, rail capacity remains highly constrained, especially for suburban services and freight, because of limited infrastructure in terms of allocated passage slots (especially on shared lines), safety procedures, rush hours etc.

Existing solutions for improvement of rail involve vast costs and environmental degradation associated with acquiring additional land, building new tracks, installing signalling systems and investing in rolling stock.

#### The Solution

We provide the solution to capacity and service problems simply by using existing infrastructure and rolling stock in a new, smarter way.

Our innovative, cutting-edge technology named 'Dynamic Coupling' enables physical connection and disconnection of trains on-the-run, quickly and safely. This holistic solution enables train platooning for a desired timeslot and safe parting of coupled trains/wagons when approaching destination.

There are many potential use cases of connecting/disconnecting trains/cars on the run such as the applications detailed below. In all of them, dynamic coupling provides train operators and infrastructure managers with flexibility and efficiency that do not exist today.

Being able to couple trains on the run, without changing the original train track occupation is a revolution.

#### DTS Applications

##### Freight

Less than 20% of the freight in EU is moved by rail today, even though it is the most efficient mean of transportation. Freight trains receive a small number of slots on the shared line, so the optimization is focused on providing point-to-point full length trains. As a result, delivery time is long and service is limited to specific destinations only. A study done by DelftU shows that the main limitation for freight is service frequency.

Using DTS dynamic coupling, freight trains/wagons can be dynamically coupled and decoupled along the route. Today's long freight trains assembled for days, constrained by global shipping delays at ports will no longer be necessary. Rail operators will be able to provide much better frequency for their freight services. Providing 'many-to-many' services, increasing frequency to specific destinations as shown in the following video will make freight rail transport much more efficient.

##### Passengers

According to latest polls most passengers would now prefer to travel by train than by other means of transportation, however today less than 10% of the total travel (measured in passenger kilometres) are done by rail.

The main reason for that is the lack of service and time to destination. Most lines are composed of many stations in which the trains must stop, making the journey long and exhausting. The energy consumption of the entire train deceleration, stopping and accelerating again is enormous.

With Dynamic Coupling system, trains do not have to stop or decelerate to pick-up passengers or let them step down at stations. Instead, a direct train departing from an intermediate station can be 'picked up' and coupled on the run with another express or inter-city train. Passenger trains with dynamic coupling system will consume less energy, require less maintenance, and reduce noise pollution.

Providing a very good alternative to cars, using DTS technology will encourage passengers' shift from private cars to rail.

Once shared rail lines are used more efficiently by employing DTS technology, rail providers will be able to add new stations at locations unserved today due to existing capacity restrictions...."

[...and so on. Maybe someone should tell these guys about the 'Slip Coach' concept as used on British railways. And the idea of a freight train having loads for multiple customers or destinations - well, this is what freight trains did until someone decided that marshalling was too expensive and only 'block trains' would work. It isn't just railway companies that are conservative, also government bodies responsible for licensing each new piece of rolling stock or signalling technology. Still, one can look forward.... Ed.]

#### (vii). EAST PALESTINE DERAILMENT

Of course this has nothing really to do with 'Harakevet' as such apart from the Editor's whimsy but 'I.R.J.' Aug. 2024 p.28 has a report on the National Transportation Safety Board report on this derailment in Ohio on 3 Feb. 2023. A bearing failed on the 23rd wagon of a 149-wagon NS

train, and a total of 51 wagons derailed. Safety issues identified included: Failure of systems to identify failing wheel bearings; inadequate training of volunteer first responders; delayed transmission of train consist information to first responders; illegibility of fire-damaged placards; use of tank wagons with documented poor derailment performance; a tank-car certification process that could not ensure that tank-car fittings were compatible with approved commodities; misleading written guidance and information about chemical hazards; a flawed communication and decision-making process. This led to five tank wagons containing vinyl chloride monomer being deliberately breached by the local incident commander in order to vent and burn off their contents – the result was a mushroom cloud over the town of East Palestine. This action was considered not technically necessary.

*See photo page 38*

#### **(viii). SURVIVOR DEMANDS MONEY FROM THE DEUTSCHE BAHN**

From 'Deutschland Radio' 09.10.2024: "The Holocaust survivor Salo Muller demand that the Deutsche Bahn should compensate financially the former deportees of the Nazi-Regime or their descendants. That Money flows is, he considers, absolutely necessary, for a specific reason.

Holocaust survivor Salo Muller has already succeeded in the Netherlands: not least thanks to his commitment, the Dutch railway company Nederlandse Spoorwegen agreed in 2019 to make compensation payments - for deportations that were carried out on Dutch railway trains during the German occupation in the Second World War.

The 88-year-old now wants Deutsche Bahn AG (DB) to also pay money to Dutch victims who are still alive or to their relatives on their behalf. After all, the Deutsche Reichsbahn usually transported the deportees onwards from the German border.

Together with the Auschwitz Committee in the Federal Republic of Germany, Salo Muller has now emphasised his demands in an open letter to DB Chairman Richard Lutz and Federal Transport Minister Volker Wissing (FDP).

*Who is Salo Muller?*

The Dutchman Salo Muller had to witness how the Nazis separated his parents from him in Amsterdam in 1942. His father and mother were taken to the 'Dutch Theatre' and deported from there to the Auschwitz extermination camp, where they were later murdered. Salo, who was six years old at the time, was sent to a crèche on the other side of the street. He survived in various hiding places and was later rescued - partly with the help of the Dutch resistance.

'These terrible events haunt me to this day,' writes Muller, who later worked as an author and physiotherapist at Ajax Amsterdam, among other things.

*What does Salo Muller want from Deutsche Bahn?*

In his open letter, Salo Muller specifically demands 'financial compensation and a sincere apology for all Dutch survivors of the deportations and for the relatives of those murdered' from Deutsche Bahn AG. After all, he writes, the crimes against thousands of Jews, Sinti and Roma have not been atoned for.

Muller expects DB to enter into negotiations with him and the Auschwitz Committee regarding a compensation payment. At the same time, Salo Muller is asking Transport Minister Wissing to support this demand and to accompany the talks.

*How does he justify his demands?*

Salo Muller essentially justifies his demands with three arguments:

#### **(i) Unatoned moral guilt**

According to Muller, it is about recognising the suffering suffered and historical responsibility. 'The Reichsbahn, as the predecessor of Deutsche Bahn, played a key role in carrying out the deportations,' the

letter states - and: 'The Dutch Railways deported the people to the German border in Nieuweschans, from where the trains were driven directly to Auschwitz by German locomotives.'

Now it is high time that Deutsche Bahn AG alleviated at least some of the immeasurable suffering.

#### **(ii). The deportees had to pay for the transport themselves**

The lawyer Martin Klingner represents Salo Muller in Germany. He points out a fact that many people are perhaps still unaware of today:

'The people who were deported on Reichsbahn trains back in the Nazi era (...) usually had to pay for the journey themselves.' Salo Muller also sees the fact that the Reichsbahn enriched itself and asked the victims to pay as a reason to demand the money back.

#### **(iii). Willingness to pay as an expression of sincere regret**

'Only those who pay are serious,' says Salo Muller. He expects Deutsche Bahn AG to be prepared to take responsibility honestly. He argues that this sincerity can be confirmed and proven by monetary payments.

*How is Deutsche Bahn responding to his demands?*

Deutsche Bahn AG has not yet publicly commented on the current open letter (as of 9 October 2024). At least in past attempts to make contact on behalf of Muller, the company has reacted negatively, says Martin Klingner. 'Deutsche Bahn AG is taking the easy way out and saying that they are not responsible for paying compensation,' says the lawyer. Instead, reference is made to the Federal Republic of Germany as the state.

In principle, Deutsche Bahn certainly acknowledges the Reichsbahn's complicity in the Holocaust. Its Executive Board has also been a regular guest at the Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Yad Vashem international memorial in Jerusalem for several years. This year, the railway became a corporate member of the memorial's circle of friends.

*How are politicians reacting?*

Salo Muller's lawyer Martin Klingner says that reactions from politicians have been mixed. On the one hand, the German government rejects the demands. 'It points out that deportation is not an independent compensation offence that is regulated by law in any way. Therefore, there are no claims.'

This can also be read in black and white in the answer to a so-called minor question from various FDP members of parliament from January 2021, in which the federal government at the time states

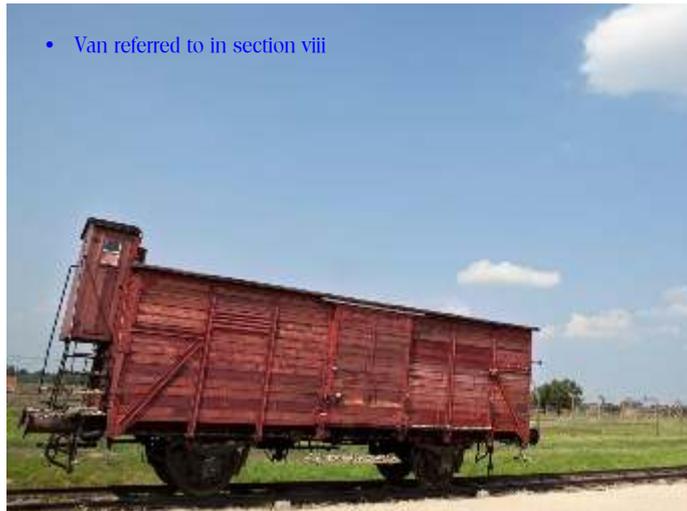
'The terrible circumstances of deportations in the course of persecution, which in many cases took place by train, but in many cases also by other means, are taken into account in the (...) various statutory and non-statutory regulations. The deportation as such cannot therefore be (partially) compensated separately as part of the overall persecution process.'

On the other hand, lawyer Klingner also reports favourable reactions from politicians: 'We have repeatedly had contact with various politicians from the Greens, the FDP and also the Social Democrats. And there is certainly a certain amount of favourable interest. But this has not yet materialised in a concrete regulation.'" *See van photo on next page*

#### **(ix). WAR DEPARTMENT '8F' 2-8-0's**

'Black Eight' is the magazine of the 'Stanier 8F Preservation Society' and, due to the pure coincidence that the engine they chose for preservation in 1968 out of the remaining survivors, BR No. 48773 had been one of those which had been originally built in the war for service overseas (see also the cover of issue 146!) and had worked in Persia (suffering a spectacular accident there) and had been repatriated from Egypt, this has drawn attention to the military careers of many engines

of this class. Over the years there have been several articles or 'snippets' and here is one from issue 153 of Autumn 2024 (p.26):



"... John Sloane explained that, whilst on a train passing Bulaq depot (between Giza and Cairo) on 13 April 1982 he managed to get a photograph of what he recognised as a row of Stanier tenders. .... In July 1952 our locomotive arrived at Derby Works for overhaul, having been withdrawn from 169 Railway Workshops (RE), Suez with a collapsed firebox crown. It returned with four other 8Fs considered to be the worst cases. The locomotives were returned without tenders. It was intended to return the locomotives after overhaul, but this was ruled out with the onset of the Suez crisis. However, during the early part of 1955 five tenders were returned from Egypt for use with the newly-overhauled locomotives.

As the tender fitted to our engine was devoid of identification but is of the correct type, we can't be certain the engine and (original) tender have been reunited. The picture raises some interesting questions: Did the original tender remain in Egypt? Possibly because it had been swapped with another at some point and was thus running behind a different locomotive and if it did, has it survived? The picture shows at least five Stanier tenders still largely intact and all for oil burners. We know that some armoured protection was fitted to some locomotives and tenders and one appears to be so fitted."

In the same issue is an article (pp.29-31) by Peter Groom on those '8F' Stanier 2-8-0's which worked at some point in Scotland. From this: "The first 8F was completed in summer 1935 but even by 1941 it appears that none had been allocated to a Scottish shed. The 'Penridge Hill' left South Wales in late 1941 with a cargo including eleven 8Fs which had worked for the LMS for about four years, to join a convoy for Persia. (It is likely they had been overhauled at Swindon). The vessel ran into a severe storm and four of the locomotives, but not their tenders, were jettisoned. The ship continued to the Clyde and the engines were sent to St. Rollox Works to be put into working order and reconverted to coal burners. They became, by a matter of weeks, the first 8Fs to work in Scotland; Crewe had already started building a batch of 8Fs for Scotland and the first one arrived before the last of the survivors of the storm left St. Rollox. ....

In 1952 five 8F's came back from the Middle East to be overhauled - WD Nos. 500, 501, 508, 511 and 512. With the change of the political situation in Egypt, they stayed in Britain, going to the Longmoor Military Railway following their protracted repairs. 500, 501 and 512 eventually were sold to British Railways as 48773-75 and allocated to Scotland and specifically Polmadie MPD; 508 and 511 also finished up in Scotland but still as army locomotives at Cairnryan (Military Port). 511 had been built at Crewe 1937 as LMS No. 8021; after WD requisition and service in Iran as WD 575 and ISR No. 41.1512 it was laid aside unserviceable and cannibalised until the deteriorating motive power situation in the Canal Zone prompted its return to the UK. Following repair at Derby and storage at Longmoor (where it was named 'Sgt. J. Smith VC, Bengal Sappers & Miners') it was sent north to No. 2 Military Port at Cairnryan on the west coast of Scotland (later to be joined by 508) where it was used after

World War 2 for transporting surplus ordnance for dumping in the Irish Sea. When operations were wound down in 1959 the two locos found themselves surplus to requirements and as BR was not interested in acquiring them both were scrapped."

(x). From Paul Salveson's blog 'Salvo' No. 323G.

"LES JOHNSON: Les joined the railway in June 1937, starting on the LMS at Barnsley Court House as a Junior Clerk. He was refused by the LNER! Barnsley Court House was a joint station between the LMS and LNER and at the time of joining it came under the LNER's jurisdiction. He was promoted into the Control Office and retired as a Deputy Chief Controller on 4th December 1952.

"At the outbreak of war I joined the railway section of the Local Defence Volunteers - later to become the Home Guard. I patrolled the centre of Barnsley armed with a brake stick! I joined the RAF in 1940 and was soon posted overseas to the Middle East. We were sent to North Luffenham for a medical check-up and then granted leave. I arrived at Peterborough on Thursday around 10pm, and had a right set-to with the RTO, who said I'd have to wait until the following morning for the first connection to Barnsley from Sheffield. I managed to get to Doncaster, hoping to get a lift towards Barnsley - it was about midnight and I had my full kit with me. I met up with a sailor who was trying to get to Thurnscoe near Barnsley. He only had a side pack, so he carried my kitbag and we set off walking. He set a cracking pace and I had trouble keeping up. There was no traffic at all, because Hull was getting a right pasting from the bombers that night. As we approached Hickleton I asked what the hurry was. He replied "If I get home before t'pit buzzer blows, I'll catch her!" I often wondered if he did.... I arrived in Barnsley just before 6am and knocked my parents up. On the Sunday evening I left for West Kirby - so I had just 72 hours embarkation leave.

I spent four and a half years overseas. There were many memorable moments, but only one to do with railways. This was when I was in charge of a party on train guard, escorting two Maryland aircraft belonging to the Fleet Air Arm from Aleppo in Turkey to Riyadh in Egypt. It took 14 days. There was one quite extraordinary occurrence when I was in the Middle East. During 1941 I was on a bus between Tel Aviv and Haifa, in what was then Palestine. A civilian got on at Hadera and sat just in front of me. He was speaking to his friend in the broadest South Yorkshire accent. I tapped him on the shoulder and asked 'What part of South Yorkshire do you come from?' 'Barnsley' he replied. 'So do I - what's your name?' It was Jack Kendrick. 'Do you have a sister called Renee and a father in the police force?' I asked. Of course it was the same Jack Kendrick I had heard of! I ended up spending two days over Christmas with Jack and his wife. He was working for the Iraq Petroleum Company in Haifa. It was a coincidence meeting him like that, but the real nub of the story is this. I was telling the tale about how I met him on that bus one night when I was in Leeds Control. One of my colleagues, Norman Henfry, turned to me and asked 'What did you say his sister's name was?' I told him it was Renee, and he said 'She's the girl my brother married!' The next time I met Renee was at Norman's funeral...."

(xi). 1941 FILM

The link : [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpNd-X\\_ct7Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpNd-X_ct7Y)

leads to an old 1941 newsreel showing - amongst other things - Stanier 2-8-0s being built for the WD and one of the remarkable Pacifics built for Iraq!

(xii). AMSTERDAM TRAM

For the record: In November 2024 there were riots against Israelis and "cancer Jews" in Amsterdam following a football match. Amongst the incidents on 11.11.2024 (several days after the initial riots and as response to a ban on rioting!) an Amsterdam tram had windows broken and fireworks thrown inside which caused fire damage....

**(xiii. BEIT NABALA QUARRIES**

Frank Adam wrote: "Articles on Beit Nabala in issues 47 and 48 caught my eye because when I was in TA 12th/13th Para in 1964 - 65 a Major had served there in the Mandate's closing years. The spur on the map not only served an army camp but quarries.

Stone was needed for railway ballast - about a cubic metre per metre of track (the 1.5 metres of track width plus...) so at least 2,000 tons per kilometre or 3,000 per mile ie 5 X 600 ton trains of 50 x12 Ton wagons. Stone has a specific gravity of about 2.5 so that many tonnes per cubic metre which is by definition is a tonne of water. Ballast having some internal spaces allows for differences between imperial tons of 1016 kg and metric tonnes 1000 kg. A cubic metre is 35 cubic feet (30% extra) on a cubic yard's 27 cu ft.

Crushed stone probably half size of ballast was aggregate for concrete - used for runways, pill boxes, permanent emplacements, quays and much else. In the first half of the late century ballast or something slightly smaller also filled the walls of temporary blockhouses etc. Look at the Israeli "tower and stockade" photos of the 1950's which have apparently wooden walls, these were actually double "skins" of plank on frames and filled with ballast - or large gravel. This technique was used by the Royal Engineers for blockhouses etc in the Boer War among others. It was rifle proof but by mid-WW II mortars and bazookas - now RPG's - would have done for it.

Another similar use was the RN's "plastic armour" to protect the bridges and so radio and chart rooms of merchant ships from marauding Focke Wulf Condors in the Western Approaches mounting 20mm cannon and machine guns.

This was a mix of asphalt and rail ballast mixed and poured from concrete mixers two inches (5cms) thick onto steel sheets about 3mm or 5mm (1/8th inch plus) gauge. When set it was bolted onto merchant ships, steel sheet "inside" as "long stop" to shards and bullets.

The branched spurs S.E. of the Bet Nabala camp are typical of ammo dumps - heavy dangerous stuff to keep at distances by their separate "natures". By 1945 the shells that mattered were 25 pounder (almost 88mm) so max. 80 per ton with packing, and 5.5" (140mm 90-100lbs) so 20 per ton. The worst accident of WW II was an ammunition ship exploding in Bari's port being used as a separate "ammunition port" which makes my point. There was a similar accident in Halifax Nova Scotia in WW I. There is still a sunk ammo "liberty ship" off the Medway estuary."

**(xiv). HMG AS GRADGRIND**

From Frank Adam: (To explain: 'HMG' is His Majesty's Government and Thomas Gradgrind is an unpleasant and unpopular character devoted to raising profits, in Charles Dickens' 1854 'Hard Times'.) In 'HaRakevet' 45 (pp10-11 & 48) Paul Cotterell mentions, astonished, that HMG "gave / donated" 2-10-0 Austerity Decapods to

the post-1945 Greek government then fighting a civil war with Communists based in Yugoslavia. They might have been worth £5,000 then so £250,000 now. It reminded me of a similar post-1920 affair. In 1974 - 78 I squatted a week of my summer holidays at my parents' London flat and searched archives at the PRO and the British Museum State Papers' Room now in the British Library. I found a slim brown - not the usual blue - "command paper" about how HMG gave the Iraqi Government - pleading they were broke fighting a civil war with the Kurds - what 's new? - the entire RE-built Basra - Baghdad WW I military railway.

Most of the booklet was about how HMG got - or extorted - from the Palestine Mandate (taxpayer) a million Sterling then, so £60 Million now, for the Sinai to Lod and Haifa RE line of WW I and to buy out the mostly French shareholders of the JJ line originally entrepreneured by the Navon family. Weizmann also mentions this in triumph, that it was paid off with some over for Haifa harbour. It was paid by a loan floated on the London stock market and taken up with encouragement from the Zionist Movement.

The Mandate's annual revenue 1920 - '39 was £2M rising to £3M. Surpluses were banked as reserves in London as Treasury Bonds or Consols etc. and amounted to a year's revenue when the Arab rebellion broke out in 1936. This reserve, no doubt slated for development, was burnt paying for "Imperial troops" and so by 1939 the police Teggart Forts were paid for by London as "Imperial defence war expenditure". After Israeli independence - if I remember the business is in D. Kimche's "Seven Fallen Pillars" - there was a squabble before HMG released the Palestine balances in London banks and HMG also scrounged about £600,000 for the Sarafand Army camp complex (Tserifin) West of Lod.



• Photos of the remains at Beit Nabala by Sybil Ehrlich.

As Valery Grossman wrote into one of his characters in "Life and Fate", his fictionalised account of the Eastern Front of WW II through Russian eyes, "Tell me what you accuse the Jews of and I shall tell you what you are guilty of."

### (xv.) BEER SHEBA CEMETERIES

Also from Frank: 'HaRakevet' 46 mentions an accident of 1917 by which a British fighter aircraft strafed a rail goods van being used as their mess by some Jewish rail workers for the Turks. The victims are buried in the "old cemetery".

In 1967- 68 my wife and I spent our Shnat sherut in Beer Sheva - then not quite 70,000 people. We lived in the ulpan Altschul complex which overlooked the old station and mosque area to the SW of the old town and all was still quite open; the present flats were not yet built and in that year the Town Hall to replace ex-British huts etc. and the Egged bus station to move out of the main square were being built. From our flat's front door and corridor balcony two storeys up we could see the British WW I military cemetery and the Turkish station, which then was an army establishment with a newly-captured repainted and repurposed Soviet armoured vehicle in its yard. We could see the first post-independence quarters Shikun Aleph and Bet on what I later learned had been the wartime RAF landing ground. At night I counted eleven radio masts across the town by their aircraft warning red lights. The whole atmosphere was still a bit 'wild East' and I had to take a rail day trip twice - to both Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, to obtain a licence to teach.

On Yom Kippur 1967 my wife and I walked to the Hazerim junction - now a mini-Dizengoff Circus - and explored the two cemeteries about a couple of hundred yards down the road to Hazerim kibbutz and air base where now the Air Force Museum is worth a visit. The old cemetery is on one side of the road and the main cemetery on the other. We noticed a large infants' plot in the main cemetery and were puzzled in the old cemetery by a multiple grave - all one expanse of concrete several metres by two metres. Someone had "labelled" that grave by writing with their finger in the wet surface cement in rabbinic cursive handwriting. My wife and I still did not have enough Hebrew to make it out but it was obviously some sort of accident.

The 1929 riots are now remembered for the Hebron massacre but there was one at Safed/ Tzefat too and as a result the British evacuated the small Jewish communities at Beer Sheva, Gaza and Nablus to simplify policing headaches. This gap in the Jewish communal presence probably explains the two cemeteries."

**For those of you who have a paid subscription, attached with this issue is a renew form for the next series beginning in March 2025. Please return it before the end of February if you wish to continue receiving HaRakevet**

- East Palestine in flames. Feb. 3 2023 (photo: 'Eric's Train Yard' in I.R.) (Note: For once nobody blamed Israel...) See page 34



# SYRIA

With this area once again in the news, we do not know how Syrian railways are faring. Here a couple of images from David Dixon taken in November 2010:



- 1. At Damascus, CFH LDE28700-258 stands on an Aleppo train Nov 2010

- 2. A train stands at Latakia station in October 2010 (photo: David Dixon)





149.10

147:10

**At least three narrow gauge trucks with flanged wheels inside a Hizbollah tunnel in Lebanon. (IDF Spokesman's Unit)**